

A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE CONGRUENCE BETWEEN THE EVALUATION
CRITERIA OF SUPERINTENDENTS AND THE IOWA STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL
LEADERS

By

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A Content Analysis of the Congruence Between the Evaluation Criteria of Superintendents and the Iowa Standards for School Leaders

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The Problem: This study was designed to analyze the evaluation criteria of the instruments used to evaluate superintendents, the job descriptions for those superintendents, and the goals written as part of their Individual Administrator Professional Development Plans (IAPDPs) to determine whether superintendents are being held accountable for serving as instructional leaders.

Procedure: The job descriptions, evaluation instruments, and goals contained in IAPDPs provided by superintendents were coded using content analysis to identify those that describe instructional leadership as part of Standard 2 of the Iowa Standards for School Leaders (ISSL). The criteria were disaggregated and further sorted by district size. An analysis was conducted from the sampling units representing 20 of the 86 eligible superintendents in certain school districts with large high school enrollments, indicated by their membership in Class 3A or 4A for football during the 2009–2010 school year. Of the 20 randomly selected superintendents, 18 provided the three documents to be analyzed. A total of 52 sampling units were analyzed as part of this study.

Findings: There was little congruence between the job descriptions and the criteria associated with instructional leadership in Standard 2. Only 17% of the 518 recording units were coded as Standard 2 in the ISSL. Additionally, there was little congruence between the goals written in IAPDP and the criteria in Standard 2 of the ISSL. Of the 87 recording units, only 25% were coded as Standard 2 in the ISSL. The size of the school district made little difference

related to Standard 2 criteria in the sampling units. Of the 18 districts reporting, 15 (83%) have implemented the ISSL standards as part of their evaluation criteria. There were nearly twice as many recording units (29%) from the evaluation instruments coded to Standard 2 than there were in the job descriptions (17%), so it was determined that the instruments were not congruent with one another.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The demands of the 2001 federal mandate, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, have placed tremendous emphasis on increasing student achievement across our country. Boards of education and other district leadership, including central office and building administrators, are working to meet the challenges that accompany the work of boosting student performance to levels never before witnessed in our nation's history. As school districts focus on accomplishing the impossible—100% of the students proficient in reading, math and science—they are examining all aspects of their organizations to find leverage for improvement.

This challenging work comes at a time when our society is experiencing great change. Compounding the challenge of educating America's youth is a shift in family structures and demographics in our communities, as diversity, poverty, drug and alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy, chronic student absenteeism, and dropout rates increase (Neild & Balfanz, 2006). These issues are causing greater strains and pressures on families, resulting in a change in the roles of both parents and teachers. As parents become less connected to schools, there is a need for teachers to step up and fill a role beyond that of "teacher." Van Velsor and Orozco (2007) identified barriers such as demographics, psychological issues, teacher attitude, and school climate that prevented active participation from parents. Schools are seeing more and more disenchanted students entering the doors of the schoolhouse as a result of parents' placing less emphasis on the need for, and value of, education. Parents are providing less support for schools and placing more blame on the educational system as their children fall short of expected outcomes.

Schools in Iowa are feeling the overwhelming burden of educating children in a dynamic society. Districts are now beginning to feel extreme pressures associated with NCLB as more

and more schools fall short of expected achievement trajectories. Based on 2009–2010 metrics, 27 out of 361 districts across Iowa were identified as districts in need of assistance for the 2010–2011 school year (Iowa Department of Education, 2010). This identification is given to districts when they underperform for two consecutive years as measured by their submission of their Annual Progress Reports (APR) or Annual Measureable Objectives (AMO). In performance, districts may fall short on goals for “all students” or for certain subgroups of students, such as those designated according to ethnic, special education, and socioeconomic status. Further study of Iowa’s state report card for No Child Left Behind (Iowa Department of Education, 2010) reveals that nearly 25% of all schools in the state, 356 of the 1427, are designated as Schools In Need of Assistance (SINA) due to lack of adequate progress for two consecutive years. The implications of being labeled a SINA school have caused a sense of urgency among districts around the state. Improvements of the necessary magnitude will require effective district-level leadership. Research studies indicate that superintendents who serve as instructional leaders contribute to the instructional effectiveness of their school districts (Bjork, 1993).

The challenges in districts and schools around the nation, and more specifically in Iowa, will require tremendous leadership from local school boards and district superintendents in order to realize growth in all students and prepare them to make productive contributions to society. Additionally, the public’s demand for improvement in our schools has created a heightened expectation for a new kind of leadership to meet these demands (Bjork, 1993). “Effective school leaders make a difference: a difference between failure and success, a difference between inertia and progress, a difference between sufficiency and excellence” (Hessel & Holloway, 2002, p. 20). Hoyle and the American Association of School Administrators Commission on Standards for the Superintendency (1993, p. 14) called superintendents “dream builders for America’s

children.” “The school district superintendent, as the chief executive officer of the board of education, plays a critical role in the education of America’s schoolchildren” (Candoli, Cullen, & Stufflebeam, 1997, p. 1). The recognition of lagging performance and a need for improvement has offered opportunities for researchers to examine the impact school superintendents make related to increased student achievement and district performance. Researchers at Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) conducted a meta-analysis of 27 studies and discovered that leadership really does matter in terms of contributing to an increase in student achievement. The meta-analysis conducted by Marzano and Waters (2009) found a positive correlation between district leadership and student achievement. In addition, their research revealed that there are specific district-level leadership responsibilities that have a statistically significant correlation with average student academic achievement. The study recognized that student achievement typically is highest when high-reliability organizations and high-performing school systems are tightly coupled, and that those systems recognize the critical role that district leadership plays.

The superintendent can and should be the Chief Academic Officer of the district. Murphy, Hallinger, and Peterson (1985) found that superintendents in instructionally effective school districts established, monitored, and maintained clear instructional and curricular goals. Bjork (1993) determined that clearly stated instructional goals are essential to the superintendent’s vision for the future of the school district. Marzano and Waters (2009) found that effective superintendents focus their efforts on creating goal-oriented districts. Collaborative goal-setting is implemented into practice and includes all relevant stakeholder groups. This includes central office staff, building-level administrators, and board members. Once goals are established, they become non-negotiable as they relate to student achievement

and classroom instruction. Further, effective superintendents set specific achievement targets for schools and students and then ensure that consistent use of research-based practice is used to reach the identified targets. This includes consistent and frequent formative assessment followed by a response to identified student needs. In addition, action research is conducted to determine professional development needs of teachers in order to ensure that students have access to high quality instruction. Firestone (2009) espoused a need for district leadership to develop a student learning culture. In a student learning culture, there is a clear vision that facilitates a deeper integration of data use, curriculum, and professional development.

Once goals are established by a school district, all energy and efforts should be aligned to the work associated with this vision. Marzano and Waters (2009) found that districts with high levels of student achievement had boards of education that were aligned with and supportive of these non-negotiable goals and that ensured that these goals remained the primary focus of the district. Other initiatives were not allowed to divert attention or resources from accomplishing these goals. The relationships among stakeholder groups are critical to maintaining this tight focus. This includes the relationships between administration and teacher unions as well as the superintendent-board relationship. Effective superintendents continually monitor established goals related to achievement and instruction to ensure that these goals are the driving force behind a district's actions. The superintendent is responsible for modeling data-driven decision-making for all staff and faculty in an effort to constantly seek opportunities for improvement (Iowa Association of School Boards, 2001).

Marzano and Waters (2009) found that effective superintendents ensure that all necessary resources, including time, money, personnel, and materials, are allocated to accomplish the district's goals. This can mean cutting back on or dropping initiatives that are not aligned with

district goals for achievement and instruction as well. Bjork (1993) suggested that budget allocations reflect the superintendent's commitment to articulated programs. Budget challenges caused by state funding cuts, failed referenda, and declining state aid due to enrollment decline require internal and external supports, and the superintendent must be able to garner support from all constituents. Hedges, Line, and Greenwald (as cited in Archibald, 2006) argued that more studies than not showed a positive correlation between levels of resources and levels of student learning. Ram (2004) found that expenditures, or resources, had a positive correlation with student achievement. Although the magnitude of the effect appeared modest, the correlation carried a high statistical significance. According to Archibald (2006, p. 35), "per-pupil spending at the school level is positively related to student achievement in reading, statistically significant, and provides evidence that resources for education do matter."

Bjork (1993) recognized that superintendents' actions and behaviors are a result of where they place priorities in their work. If superintendents believe that organizational stability and advancing student learning are fundamentally the most important, they will use routine managerial activities to increase effectiveness as instructional leaders. These activities can be reframed to support the instructional efforts of principals and teachers. Boards of education can encourage superintendents to reframe those activities to support instruction and student learning by holding them accountable through performance evaluations. Performance evaluations by boards of education are a critical element to ensure that superintendents are performing at expected levels and contributing to the advancement of student achievement. "U.S. school district superintendents are and must be accountable to their school boards, communities, faculties, and students for delivering effective educational leadership" (Candoli, Cullen, & Stufflebeam, 1997, p. viii).

Unfortunately, the practices and procedures of sound superintendent evaluation systems have not evolved to keep pace with the changing role of the superintendent. Structures and processes have been in place to conduct performance reviews for most educational personnel, yet only recently has focus been placed on the necessity for superintendent evaluation systems. The research (Marzano & Waters, 2009) is clear on the importance of the superintendent's being an instructional leader with the capability of impacting student achievement. It is critical to have an evaluation system in place to measure the effectiveness of the superintendent in this pursuit.

Statement of Problem

School districts across the state face tremendous challenges as they respond to lagging student achievement and performance; increasing parental pressure; increasing public accountability; and rising dropout rates, drug use, teen pregnancy, unemployment, underemployment and poverty. Superintendents are recognized as the chief school administrators and the leaders of school districts. Improving student academic success should be included as a mandatory standard of superintendent performance as it highlights the critical role of educational leaders (DiPaola & Stronge, 2003). Murphy (2003) espoused a need for a new leadership model focused on students, learning, and teaching. Unfortunately, the demands placed on the district's top job are far-reaching, and superintendents find themselves compromising between management activities and instructional leadership behaviors. Elmore (as cited in Murphy, 2003, p. 3) found the following:

Insofar as there is any empirical evidence on the frequency of actual instructional leadership in the work of school administrators, it points to a consistent pattern: direct involvement in instruction is among the least frequent activities performed by administrators of any kind at any level.

District-level leaders must recognize the need for a shift in their practice—a shift from managing schools to leading the instructional efforts of the district. Boards of education can hold superintendents more accountable for this shift by developing evaluation procedures that reflect a need for superintendents to be instructional leaders.

DiPaola and Stronge (2003) posited a need for school boards to craft policy, regulations, and procedures for a quality performance evaluation system for the superintendent. Boards should develop policies that guide the development and adoption of a comprehensive evaluation process. The policies should include the specific details of the process, such as timelines for implementation; instruments that will be used; and training for board members, the superintendent and any other participants. The use of an effective evaluation system should hold superintendents accountable for actions and behaviors associated with instructional leadership.

Purpose

The demands of NCLB have created a sense of urgency within districts around the country. Schools are having difficulty meeting the needs of learners and are not yielding the student achievement results necessary to avoid placement on the SINA lists. In Iowa, with over a quarter of the schools already on the list and the threat of more and more schools falling short of state and district trajectories, boards of education and district leaders must respond to the challenge of educating all students. One point of leverage is the leadership at the district level. Leadership from the superintendent is a critical component of the improvement of an educational organization. Specific behaviors and actions of the superintendent contribute to increased student achievement and performance.

Unfortunately, superintendents are not always focused on, or rewarded for, the actions that contribute to advancement in student achievement. They find themselves pulled in a variety

of directions and can easily be removed from what matters most—the teaching and learning process. In order to hold superintendents accountable for this new form of leadership, boards should develop job descriptions with specific criteria that are associated with instructional leadership. Further, it is critical to have an effective, comprehensive evaluation system to track the performance of superintendents and ensure that they are focusing their time on activities that contribute to an increase in student performance. The system should reflect and measure a superintendent's ability to be a leader in the teaching and learning domain. Last, superintendents should write personal professional development goals for themselves that reflect instructional leadership.

The Iowa Department of Education, School Administrators of Iowa (SAI), and the Wallace Foundation (2007) recognized the Iowa Standards for School Leaders (ISSL) as the standards for measuring administrator effectiveness and success in Iowa. Further, these groups have developed a comprehensive superintendent leadership performance review that provides a set of policies and procedures for conducting superintendent performance appraisals. Because public policy requires that Individual Administrator Professional Development Plans (IAPDPs) be drafted or completed, administrators from all over the state write IAPDPs each year that align with the ISSL. It is expected that the development of individual professional goals linked to these standards, coupled with the long-range district goals, guide the work of administrators as they focus on the school year ahead of them. The ISSL have a significant research base and provide a guide for the work of school administrators.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the congruence between the duties listed in selected superintendents' job descriptions, the goals written in superintendents' IAPDPs, instrument criteria used by boards of directors to evaluate superintendents during the 2009–2010

school year, and the criteria contained in the ISSL. State legislation, specifically Senate File (SF) 277 (2007), requires that the evaluation criteria outlined in the ISSL be implemented statewide and that the ISSL serve as a framework for the categorization of the criteria.

The results of the present study will inform boards of education across the state of Iowa as they consider the future use of job descriptions and the evaluation system to hold superintendents accountable for the work they do. Additionally, this study will provide insight into the priorities superintendents place on their work and challenge these leaders to consider operating as instructional leaders in an effort to boost student achievement. Others who have an interest in leadership in education, such as School Administrators of Iowa (SAI) and the Iowa Association of School Boards (IASB), will find value in this research as well. This study will provide insight into the work of superintendents across Iowa and provide evidence concerning the alignment of their work with instructional leadership.

Research Questions

- 1) Do the job descriptions, IAPDPs, and evaluation instruments used to evaluate superintendents in the state of Iowa reflect actions and behaviors associated with instructional leadership as reflected by the ISSL?
 - a) Do the roles and expectations outlined in the job descriptions reflect the leadership standard related to instructional leadership?
 - b) Do the goals developed by superintendents as part of their IAPDPs reflect the leadership standard related to instructional leadership?
 - c) Do the criteria identified in the superintendent evaluation instruments reflect the leadership standard related to instructional leadership?

2) Does the size of the school district have any effect on the level of congruence of the job description, evaluation instrument, and IAPDP with the ISSL and their criteria related to instructional leadership?

3) What is the level of congruence of the evaluation instruments used to evaluate superintendents, the superintendents' job descriptions, and their Individual Administrator Professional Development Plans with the ISSL and their criteria associated with instructional leadership?

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Purpose of Evaluation

The practice of evaluating the school superintendent is a critical component of the overall effectiveness of a school district. School boards should view their responsibility for conducting a performance appraisal of the superintendent as an accountability mechanism to provide feedback to their constituents related to the overall performance of the school district's superintendent. According to the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) and the National School Boards Association (NSBA) (1980), the evaluation of the superintendent will enable the board to hold the superintendent accountable for carrying out its policies and responding to its priorities. Likewise, DiPaola and Stronge (2003) recognized the evaluation process as a chief component of holding superintendents accountable for their work. The findings of Glass (1992) support this position: nearly 55% of all superintendents across the country believed that the implementation of an evaluation system was meant to ensure systematic accountability. Superintendents must answer to their boards of education and must focus their work on those priorities that their boards identify as valuable and necessary to move the district forward (DiPaola & Stronge, 2003). The superintendent performance review creates an opportunity for the board to reflect on the progress of the superintendent toward board priorities and to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the superintendent related to those priorities.

The superintendent evaluation system can and should serve as a tool to improve educational performance in the nation's schools (Marzano & Waters, 2009). Robinson and Bickers (1990) noted the impact that an effective superintendent can have on the overall

effectiveness of a system. As the chief executive officer of the school district, the superintendent can have a dramatic influence on the principals and teachers in the district. This influence can shape the actions and behaviors of principals and teachers related to what occurs in the classrooms. Consequently, the instruction received by students in the classroom is directly influenced by the school superintendent. DiPaola and Stronge (2003) recognized that the work and priorities of the school should be connected to the public's vision for its schools. The evaluation process allows the board of education to hold the superintendent accountable to the public's vision for its schools by measuring his or her efforts related to progress in this domain. Therefore, the process should be ongoing and directly connected to school improvement efforts identified by all stakeholders. Further, researchers recognized that the superintendent evaluation system has the potential to contribute to the planning and goal setting of the district. DiPaola and Stronge (2003) believed that the superintendent evaluation system could help the board of directors and superintendent prioritize goals and focus efforts on the work deemed most important.

An effective superintendent evaluation system can contribute to improvement in communication between the superintendent and the board that is necessary for developing open dialogue and constant conversations around continual improvement (DiPaola, 2007; DiPaola & Stronge, 2001a; Glass & Franceschini, 2007). Myers (1993) discovered that both board presidents and superintendents overwhelmingly viewed the purpose of superintendent evaluation as improving relations between boards and superintendents. Likewise, Lueders (1987) concluded in his research that one of the primary purposes of the evaluation system was to establish and maintain good working relationships between the superintendent and board of directors. These findings are supported in survey data collected by Glass (1992) and Robinson

and Bickers (1990) indicating that a majority of superintendents across the country viewed the evaluation process as a tool for improving the relationship between the superintendent and the board. Frequent and consistent communication that is open and accurate contributes to the development of the strong, healthy relationship between the board and superintendent that is necessary for everyone to work together effectively.

It is necessary to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of superintendents related to their work (DiPaola, 2007; DiPaola & Stronge, 2003; Kowalski, 2006; Peterson, 1989). The job description allows the board of directors to establish the function of the superintendent's work and to then use the evaluation system to identify job objectives and the superintendent's success in meeting those targets. As noted by Robinson and Bickers (1990), the superintendent performance review can be used to clarify the roles of the superintendent and board of education. Survey data gathered by Glass (2007) also revealed that many superintendents believed that one of the primary functions of the evaluation system was to define the roles of their work, with 33% of respondents identifying this as the main function of performance review. In addition, DiPaola and Stronge (2003) espoused this belief when identifying the purpose of evaluation. Lueders' study (1987) identified the use of superintendent evaluations to clarify expectations and roles for the superintendent and board. The research clearly reveals a need for roles and responsibilities to be identified and articulated by the board in order for the superintendent to successfully do his or her job. The evaluation process is one avenue for the board to use to communicate its expectations to the superintendent.

The superintendent evaluation system provides an opportunity for the superintendent's personal and professional growth. In order for this to occur, researchers identified a need for the evaluation system to have research-based criteria about effective superintendent behaviors. Such

criteria must have the ability to be substantiated by measureable data from multiple sources and must be legal, feasible, accurate, and useful (DiPaola & Stronge, 2003; Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1988; Robinson & Bickers, 1990). Additionally, the performance review should be intended to improve the overall performance of the superintendent rather than serve as a measure of incompetence. Glass (1992) found that many superintendents, nearly 32%, viewed the process of evaluation as an opportunity to establish performance goals for themselves. In addition, respondents to Glass's survey (1992) reported that improvement of job performance was ranked second in importance by board presidents and ranked first in importance by superintendents. Lueders' (1987) study supports the use of an evaluation system for continual improvement of superintendent performance. As part of this continual improvement, superintendents can develop goals and be held accountable for growth in these goals through the evaluation process. Through the evaluation process, boards of education can and should establish these goals as they recognize weaknesses as well as improvement needs. Glass (2007) found that nearly 47% of superintendents believed that the evaluation system could help diagnose strengths and weaknesses and contribute to the development of professional goals for their work.

Last, Robinson and Bickers (1990) recognized that many states mandate the evaluation of the school superintendent and that the implementation of an evaluation process allows the board of directors to fulfill its legal obligation. The evaluation of most school personnel, including teachers and principals, has occurred for years, but until recently, the evaluation of the superintendent was conducted on a very limited basis. In the state of Iowa, there is legislative evidence of the importance of superintendent evaluation. SF 277 (2007) requires boards of education to evaluate superintendents. Further, the Code of Iowa and Iowa Administrative Code

include these mandates. Continuing Contract For Administrators in Iowa Code (1987) directs boards of education to establish written evaluation criteria and to implement established evaluation procedures annually. In addition, this mandate orders the establishment of written job descriptions for all supervisory positions, including the superintendent's. The job description provides criteria to the superintendent related to board expectations and identified responsibilities. In the section entitled Personnel Evaluation, Iowa Administrative Code (2011) includes the requirement for the board to adopt and implement evaluation criteria and procedures for all contracted staff. These processes are expected to conform to Iowa Code provisions for Evaluation Criteria And Procedures (1987) and Continuing Contract For Administrators (1987).

Limitations in Past Practice of Evaluation

Until recently, boards of education have not placed a priority on the evaluation of the superintendent. This is reflected in the inadequate structures, practices, and protocols implemented by school districts around the country to conduct performance reviews of district leadership. The lack of a carefully designed and executed system of performance appraisal can jeopardize the integrity of the evaluation, and the significant lack of attention and low priority assigned to the process is problematic (DiPaola & Stronge, 2001a; McGrath, 2007). DiPaola and Stronge (2003) have identified several omissions of, errors in, and limitations to the evaluation process that have limited its effectiveness in making the process meaningful to both the superintendent and the board of education that conducts the assessment. These issues prevent both the board of education and superintendent from valuing the evaluation system and making it a priority.

Most school districts have five- or seven-member boards that conduct superintendents' performance reviews. The superintendent of schools is the only employee appointed directly by

the board, and directors are responsible for the evaluation of the superintendent. DiPaola and Stronge (2003) recognized superintendent evaluation as being unique due to a lack of a single evaluator determining performance expectations. They noted that many board members, most of whom are lay members of the community, have uneven or inadequate training in performance evaluation. The evaluation can potentially become a “conglomerate of conflicting perspectives” (DiPaola & Stronge, 2003, p. 3). When the opinions of several individuals are blended together, it is not surprising that what is eventually reported is a compromise or middle ground of the thoughts, beliefs, and ideas of the multiple assessors. Superintendents receive a kind of “middle of the road” evaluation that reports performance in very vague and general terms. These types of evaluations are not beneficial to the people evaluated and, consequently, little value is placed on the information reported. In a survey of superintendents in New York State, Dillon and Hallowell (as cited in Candoli, Cullen, & Stufflebeam, 1997) found that nearly 45% of superintendents pointed to board members’ lack of skills necessary to conduct an effective evaluation as a major weakness of the evaluation system. This is a critical flaw in the evaluation system, considering that nearly half of the superintendents lacked confidence in the skills of those who were conducting evaluations. The integrity of the evaluation process is compromised due to the perceived lack of competence and understanding of the board related to the superintendent’s work. It stands to reason that a critical component of any evaluation system would be the need for those being evaluated to trust and respect those doing the evaluation. This was evident in Myers’ (1993) study focused on the perceptions of superintendents and board presidents related to the evaluation process. Both groups perceived the greatest flaw of evaluation procedures to be board members’ orientation to the evaluation process. In addition, Myers’ study identified training for the evaluators as ranking third in priority for both

superintendents and board presidents. The research revealed a clear need for board members to be trained and supported in conducting effective, appropriate evaluations of superintendents that are valued by all parties involved.

DiPaola and Stronge (2003) recognized that an absence of clearly defined job expectations and performance goals often plague superintendent evaluations. Unfortunately, the lack of clearly defined goals and expectations results in evaluations relying on collected data and information that are not connected to the expectations, goals and priorities of the board of directors. Myers' study (1993) noted that the types of data sources used in evaluation were problematic. DiPaola and Stronge (2003) believed that tangible, objective ways of knowing how well the superintendent performs are critical. They acknowledged, however, that often evaluations are based merely on suppositions drawn from informal sources. Unfortunately, informal collection of evidence causes decisions to be made on evidence that is superficial. An informal process for documenting performance can easily result in numerous problems, including the following: perceptions skewed by a few vocal advocates or complaints; performance reviews based on anecdotal, partial evidence; evaluations unrelated to measures of success or achievement of organizational goals; a false sense of security regarding progress; decisions uninformed by results; and the absence of clear direction for continuous improvement and future direction. In *The 1992 study of the American school superintendency*, Glass (1992) found that nearly 61% of superintendents reported that they were "sometimes" or "rarely" evaluated according to the criteria established as part of the evaluation process. Glass believes that this indicates potential community or intra-board politics creating tension in the relationship between the board of directors and superintendent.

It is critical for the board of directors to use objective data when conducting superintendent evaluations. Although there is a need to use both formal and informal data, and many data sources can be used (DiPaola, 2007), it is important for evaluators to stay away from subjective data points (Matthews, 2001). Glass (1992) discovered that too much subjectivity is involved in the evaluation process when informal data, rather than formal, objective information, are collected and used. This results in an evaluation laden with feelings and opinions. Robinson and Bickers (1990) point out that in this approach to performance review, evaluations are rarely conducted until a crisis occurs. Unfortunately, when a crisis triggers the evaluation, feelings and opinions drive it, and it is used as a way to respond and punish rather than being conducted objectively with the intent of improving performance. Another flawed approach to evaluation is defined as the “ax-grinding” assessment, as Robinson and Bickers (1990) discussed. Again, instead of using objective data gathered from a variety of data sources, the evaluators use the process as an opportunity to express personal agendas or to harass the superintendent for personal reasons. In addition, the professional evaluation may reflect the personal actions of the superintendent because of the lack of objective data (Maloney, 1996). Glass (2007) found that superintendents who felt that they were unfairly evaluated reported that their boards’ evaluations did not adhere to identified criteria. The use of unfair evaluation practices may result in poor decisions, including the termination of the superintendent’s contract. Robinson and Bickers (1990) pointed out that in these cases, superintendent termination was too often grounded in personality and board relations issues rather than overall performance in the job. Hoyle and Skrla (1999) contended that a superintendent may receive the highest ratings on most of the evaluation criteria, but not receive a new contract due to personality conflicts and politics that are beyond the superintendent’s control. This evidence suggests that the superintendent can be

doing all the right things, yet be removed from service due to data points unrelated to performance on identified criteria related to improving the school organization.

DiPaola and Stronge (2003) recognized that lack of constructive feedback, failure to recognize and reinforce outstanding service, and dividing rather than unifying collective efforts to educate students were the dominant criticisms of personnel evaluation practices. Further, for evaluation to benefit the superintendent and the school system, traditional problems such as these must be resolved. Likewise, the National School Board Association recognized similar errors and mistakes in the evaluation process, including the following:

- evaluations conducted in a vacuum,
- using evaluations for purposes of correcting deficiencies only,
- failing to acknowledge and reward good work,
- measuring performance without carefully constructed standards,
- not allowing a response of the superintendent to feedback received,
- not providing adequate time for the superintendent to fix identified deficiencies,
- and
- assuming that longer evaluation forms are better (Robinson & Bickers, 1990, p. 11).

The evaluation process should be meaningful and beneficial for both the evaluator and the individual being evaluated. Recognizing the limitations of the process is critical to taking the steps necessary to ensure that the process and procedures are executed in a way that avoids the identified pitfalls outlined in the review of this literature. Fortunately, as continued focus is placed on the role of the superintendent, the creation of comprehensive evaluation processes and procedures is receiving more attention as well.

Job Descriptions

Researchers recognize the need for comprehensive job descriptions that outline specific job responsibilities and duties for superintendents (Calzi, 1989; DiPaola, 2007; DiPaola & Stronge, 2003; Kowalski, 2006). Additionally, there must be a strong alignment between the job description and evaluation in order to contribute to smooth communication and prevent misunderstandings between the board of education and the superintendent (DiPaola & Stronge, 2003). Kowalski (2011) found that 72% of superintendents identified the job description as a basis for evaluation. The school system's goals should shape the job description for all employees, including the superintendent. In addition, the job description should be the starting point for determining evaluation criteria used to further define expectations of the school superintendent. Robinson and Bickers (1990) discovered that 90% of superintendents reported being evaluated annually, and fewer than 10% said that their boards discussed explicit guidelines and performance standards with them when they were hired. The researchers also found that superintendents were not really evaluated against criteria in their job descriptions. In *The 1992 study of the American school superintendency*, Glass (1992) discovered that while nearly 88% of superintendents reported having written job descriptions, only 56.9% said that they actually were evaluated according to the criteria of their job descriptions. "This belief by a significant number of superintendents that they are not being evaluated against criteria in their job descriptions reinforces the notion that the quality of interpersonal relationships between the superintendent and board members is really what counts" (Glass, 1992, p. 41). This trend continued in Glass's 2000 study, in which barely half of the superintendents who responded to the survey acknowledged being evaluated against criteria in their job descriptions (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000). Although DiPaola and Stronge (2003) recognized that most local school boards have

traditionally defined the responsibilities of the superintendent in terms of a job description, many times it was only loosely related to actual job responsibilities. Additionally, the job description was even more loosely connected to the superintendent's evaluation (DiPaola & Stronge, 2001a, 2001b).

According to DiPaola and Stronge (2003), it is critical that the job description be an accurate general description of the superintendent's role, serve as a useful guide in advertising for and selecting a superintendent, serve as a basis upon which the superintendent's evaluation can be built, and be rationally connected to the specific duties and responsibilities contained within the superintendent's performance evaluation. Glass (2007) determined that 89% of superintendents felt that their boards evaluated them fairly or very fairly. The superintendent respondents who felt that evaluations were unfair reported that their boards did not adhere to the identified criteria.

DiPaola and Stronge (2003) espoused a need for accountability and fair evaluation of personnel at all levels, including the superintendent. They suggested that a fair evaluation of the superintendent requires congruence among district goals, evaluation instruments, actual duties performed by the superintendents, and standards that guide the profession. It is critical to include an appropriate job description that clearly articulates job duties and responsibilities as part of the evaluation process.

Personnel Evaluation Standards

There is a clear and definite need to conduct sound evaluations of superintendents (Stufflebeam, 1994). In school districts' efforts to educate children effectively and to achieve educational goals related to increased student learning, it is critical that boards of education develop the comprehensive systems of evaluation necessary to improve superintendents'

performance and to drive the work of the organizations that they lead. When done effectively, evaluations can help superintendents better understand their organizational roles and responsibilities, recognize and capitalize on their strengths as well as identify and build upon their weaknesses, and determine professional development needs that are necessary to acquire the skills and knowledge to perform the functions of the position (DiPaola & Stronge, 2003; Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1988; Stufflebeam, 1994). Further, the evaluation process can provide important data to superintendents in regard to the overall effectiveness of the district and contribute to the identification of goals to improve the system as a whole.

The 16-member Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1988) studied personnel evaluation practices around the country; enlisted the help of hundreds of educators, including teachers, administrators, board members, and other stakeholders involved in the evaluation of educational personnel; and developed the Personnel Evaluation Standards as a result of its work. The committee recognized five major assumptions used to guide its efforts. First, it acknowledged that all efforts in schools should come back to the primary focus—providing effective service to students. This means that evaluation efforts must be designed to guide educators in serving students more effectively and to advance the theory and practice of education. Second, the process should be constructive. It should not be used as a method to cause harm by threatening or demoralizing those being evaluated. The system should be clear and fair. Evaluations also can and should contribute to plans related to professional development. Data collected by evaluations can be used to identify the needs of individuals, and action plans can be implemented to provide training and learning related to identified weaknesses or deficiencies. The committee recognized the complexity of the evaluation and

acknowledged that standards do not help evaluators determine what good administration looks like. From its work, the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation developed and implemented 21 standards that have been divided into four general categories that correspond to four basic attributes of sound evaluation. The four categories include the following:

- The propriety standards, which require evaluations to be conducted legally, ethically, and with due consideration for the welfare of the person evaluated. They include service orientation, formal evaluation guidelines, conflict of interest, access to personnel evaluation reports, and interactions with the individual being evaluated.
- The utility standards, which are intended to guide evaluations so that they are informative, timely, and influential. They include constructive orientation, defined uses, evaluator credibility, functional reporting, and follow-up and impact.
- The feasibility standards, which require evaluation systems that are easy to implement, efficient in using time and resources, adequately funded, and politically viable. They include practical procedures, political viability, and fiscal viability.
- The accuracy standards, which require the obtained information to be technically accurate and conclusions to be linked logically to the data. They include defined role, work environment, documentation of procedures, valid measurement, reliable measurement, systematic data control, bias control, and monitoring evaluation systems (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1988, p. 11–13).

The personnel evaluation standards provide an effective framework for boards of education as they begin to plan for conducting performance reviews of the superintendent (Stufflebeam, 1994). The standards are intended primarily “to assist professional educators in

developing, assessing, adapting, and improving systems for evaluating educational personnel” (Candoli, Cullen, & Stufflebeam, 1997, p. 22). The standards can be used throughout the evaluation process and contribute positively to a variety of personnel actions (see Appendix A). The literature on the purpose of evaluation and on common mistakes or errors in conducting evaluations calls for a closer examination of how the standards can help to define the role of the superintendent, structure performance reviews, and determine the superintendent’s professional development needs.

Researchers acknowledge the need for the roles and responsibilities of the superintendent to be clearly defined as part of an effective superintendent performance appraisal (DiPaola & Stronge, 2003; Glass, 2007; Lueders, 1987). Implementation of the personnel evaluation standards may ensure that this is accomplished effectively, ethically, and legally in the evaluation process (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1988). The fundamental mission of all schools is to serve students and the communities in which they live. The service orientation of the superintendent should align with this fundamental mission. Therefore, the superintendent evaluation system should maintain a strong focus on sound educational principles, effective performance of job responsibilities, and the fulfillment of institutional missions so that the community and students are well served. When addressing the evaluatee, evaluators should consider this greater purpose and always address the evaluatee in a professional, considerate, and courteous manner to enhance the evaluation process and give merit to the outcomes of the evaluation. This approach recognizes that the evaluation system can provide for the greater good of the organization beyond any one individual.

The developers of the evaluation system must consider the credibility of the evaluator(s) when planning and implementing such a system. As the board begins to define the

superintendent's role, it is critical that the process be done in a professional way so that the evaluatee respects the process and results (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1988). The evaluators who manage and execute the evaluation must have the required qualifications, skills, and authority to conduct the review in order to bring greater utility to the process. All parties should view the process as a constructive way to develop human resources, which supports the larger goal of providing excellent service to the community. The development and monitoring of the process should be collaborative and involve all board members. In addition, the report, whether given in written or oral form, should be clear, timely, accurate, and germane so that it is practical and of value to the evaluatee. Likewise, a follow-up to the report should be scheduled to aid in the understanding of the report and to initiate appropriate actions. In defining the expectations of the superintendent, the board should clearly define roles, responsibilities, performance objectives, and needed qualifications. This will contribute to the accuracy of the various components of evaluation. In addition, the board should consider the context in which the superintendent works so that environmental influences and constraints are considered. Last, the process should be reviewed periodically so that appropriate revisions can be made.

Conducting effective and meaningful performance reviews requires the implementation of several of the personnel evaluation standards defined by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1988). When considering the legal and ethical considerations, evaluations of superintendents should assure that institutions' goals are understood and pursued, promised services are delivered, and professional capacities are advanced. Formal evaluation guidelines should exist in statements of policy, agreements, or manuals so that they are consistent and implemented equitably. Last, the evaluator should interact with the evaluatee in a

professional manner, and any conflicts of interest should be identified immediately and discussed openly. Access to all performance appraisals of superintendents should be limited to only those with legitimate needs to review and use them.

In an effort to make superintendent evaluations informative, timely, and influential, the board should discuss the intended use of the evaluation with the evaluatee (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1988). The evaluations must be conducted professionally so that they are respected by all parties. In addition, they should be managed and executed by persons with the necessary qualifications, skills, sensitivity, and authority. As with most aspects of the evaluation process, there should be follow-up to assist the evaluatee in understanding the outcomes of the evaluation and prepare him or her to take action. All stakeholders should contribute to this collaborative process, and the board should provide adequate time and resources to conduct this process. The accuracy of the performance appraisal is critical. The roles, responsibilities, and performance objectives should be clearly articulated. In addition, the board should give careful consideration to the work environment to account for environmental influences and constraints. The board should carefully process and maintain the evaluation and keep its outcome secure. Periodic review can ensure that appropriate revisions are made to the processes to maintain the accuracy of the performance review.

An important outcome of the superintendent evaluation system is the identification of areas for improvement in performance to support the superintendent in the development of an Individual Administrator Professional Development Plan (IAPDP). Effective implementation of the personnel evaluation standards can assist superintendents and boards in making determinations regarding individual professional development plans (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1988). Legal and ethical considerations would include the

development of formal evaluation guidelines that are recorded and provided in statements of policy and agreements. This not only assures consistency and equitability but also prevents conflicts of interest. All interactions between evaluators and the evaluatee should be professional and respectful. Last, access to the final reports should be limited to those with legitimate need to review and use.

Consideration should be given to all of the utility standards when implementing an evaluation to aid in the determination of evaluatee's professional development needs (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1988). The board should construct the process to contribute to the development of human resources to provide excellent service to the students. The board must communicate the intended use of the evaluation to the superintendent, letting them know that it will be used to determine professional development plans. The evaluators' credibility must be considered. The evaluatee should find all reports to be clear, timely, accurate, and practical. There should be follow-up with the superintendent to aid in the understanding of the results. All roles, responsibilities, performance objectives, and needed qualifications should be clearly defined. The work environment should be considered. The results should be kept secure and carefully processed and maintained. Last, the process should be reviewed periodically so that appropriate revisions can be made.

The personnel standards developed by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1988) should be instrumental in designing and implementing an evaluation system that can effectively measure the performance of the district's superintendent. In recognition of what is at stake—the learning of children in the community—it is imperative to develop an effective system to conduct this important work.

Superintendent Evaluation Models

Candoli, Cullen and Stufflebeam (1997) identified, described, and assessed 12 models of superintendent evaluation in use today as identified in a research project conducted at the Center for Research on Educational Accountability and Teacher Evaluation (CREATE). They categorized the models into three types of evaluations. The categories are derived according to the basis on which evaluations are made, namely, whether evaluation conclusions are based mainly on “Global Judgment,” “Judgment Driven by Specified Criteria,” or “Judgment Driven by Data.” The three categories of evaluation and the models reflective of those categories include the following:

- Global Judgment—board judgment, descriptive narrative reports, formative exchanges about performance, stakeholder evaluation;
- Judgment Driven by Specified Criteria—printed rating forms, report cards, management by objectives, performance contracting, duties-based evaluation; and
- Judgment Driven by Data—superintendent portfolios, student outcome measures, school and district accreditation.

Although categorized into three groups according to how evaluation conclusions are drawn, the models are unique and differ from one another in several ways, including their features, variations, uses, data collection methods, performance criteria, performance standards, sources of data, reporting methods, timetables, participants, concepts of administration, and oversight of the evaluation and provision for appeals (see Appendix B). The description and analysis of the models that follow result from a thorough evaluation of each alternative by CREATE’s project team. As part of this analysis, the project team drew from research literature; evaluation materials acquired during the literature search; and knowledge, expertise, and

experiences with superintendent evaluation systems from the various team members (Candoli, Cullen, & Stufflebeam, 1997). In reviewing the 12 identified models of superintendent evaluation and comparing them to the personnel evaluation standards, both strengths and weaknesses are quickly realized in each of the described models (see Appendix C and D).

The models identified in the category of Global Judgment have limited strengths. Many of them are inexpensive, easy to apply, and include the district's top decision makers. These easy-to-use models allow for ongoing and frequent exchanges between the board and superintendent. Unfortunately, these alternatives are significantly flawed in regard to their accuracy. In most of these identified models, evaluation criteria lack clarity and specificity and in some cases are missing altogether. These types of evaluations are prone to bias or conflict of interest. Further, there is limited utility to these models. Few decisions can be made about the superintendent's performance because these models are associated with unclear criteria and data, and their accuracy is compromised.

Specified performance criteria characterize models of evaluation classified within the Judgment Driven by Specified Criteria category. These types of evaluation are potentially more objective and offer greater accuracy than the Global Judgment alternative models. Unfortunately, their accuracy could be compromised if criteria are biased, out of date, superficial, or inadequate. These types of evaluations are popular around the country. Candoli, Cullen and Stufflebeam (1997) found printed rating forms and management by objective to be the predominant evaluation models used in the superintendent evaluation process. According to the researchers, these models in isolation neither adequately give superintendents a chance to really understand the board's satisfaction with their performance nor provide the board with an assessment of the superintendent's own job satisfaction. Kerr (1994) found that most school

boards across Iowa used a checklist or rating scale as their methodology for evaluating their superintendents, with nearly 87% of districts reporting checklist use. This finding is supported by Glass's (1992) study that revealed that nearly 50% of superintendents across the country were evaluated with this methodology. Robinson and Bickers (1990) noted a figure of 80% of superintendents being evaluated by this method.

Clear data sources for making judgments characterize models of evaluation classified as Judgment Driven by Data. The use of data reduces the risks of biases or conflicts of interest, but it also has the potential of alienating stakeholder groups from participating in and contributing to the evaluation process. This could occur when data collection is not comprehensive and inclusive of all stakeholder groups. Further, local control is completely removed from the evaluation process if the practice is combined with the district accreditation process. These models focus the work of the superintendent on what matters: student achievement. Duvall (2005) discovered that a data-driven evaluation approach coupled with a pluralistic model not only strengthened the superintendent and board relationship twofold but also helped districts recognize an increase in student achievement three to four times that of districts that did not employ this approach. Further, boards were 87–93% less likely to report conflict between the board and superintendent with this approach to evaluation. One model of evaluation classified as Judgment Driven by Data that shows promise is the superintendent portfolio. It holds much promise for promoting self-assessment, team accountability, unity among all levels of staff, and team efforts and mentoring (Damon, Schory, & Martin, 1993). It also promotes reflective thinking that can bring about needed changes and improved leadership for school districts and schools.

Candoli, Cullen, and Stufflebeam (1997) concluded that all 12 evaluation models identified in CREATE's study had both strengths and weaknesses related to personnel evaluation standards. In all cases, the evaluations must be carried out by credible evaluators who have the requisite skills, sensitivity, authority, and training to perform this function (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1988). The researchers encouraged readers to select among and improve upon existing models. The outcome of such activity could result in an evaluation process that capitalizes on the strengths of various models while minimizing the weaknesses of others. Boards of education have a responsibility to create a superintendent performance evaluation system that not only satisfies the personnel standards (Candoli, Cullen, & Stufflebeam, 1997) but also focuses on key superintendent duties and competencies, encourages and supports board and superintendent collaboration, and promotes improved teaching and learning. DiPaola and Stronge (2003, p. 35) believed that the foundation of an effective performance evaluation system in education, including that for superintendents, is "the use of clearly described and well documented performance standards." Further, these researchers believed that the adoption of a comprehensive performance-based assessment process should provide clear expectations, use multiple data sources, require regular communication, provide useful feedback to superintendents on the quality of their performance, provide the constructive feedback necessary for superintendents to responsibly plan for their own professional growth and development, and assist school board members and the superintendent in staying focused on the goals they set to help students achieve at higher levels.

Evaluation Criteria

DiPaola and Stronge (2003) posited a need for boards of education to clearly define the roles, expectations, and goals expected of superintendents. Redfern (1980) believed that regular,

formal evaluations offered boards the best means of assessing their chief administrators' total performance. This included assurances to superintendents that they would know the standards against which they would be evaluated and that would be involved in their development. In addition, regular, formal evaluations require the board as a whole to evaluate the superintendent against the agreed-upon standards. The relationship between the superintendent and the board of education is critical, and open dialogue about the processes associated with establishing the roles, duties, and responsibilities, as well as the process of evaluation, could prevent miscommunication, frustration, and confusion on the part of the superintendent and the board of education when it comes time to evaluate the superintendent (Glass & Franceschini, 2007; Kowalski, 2006). There really should not be any surprises at the time of evaluation if clearly established criteria and expectations are set ahead of time (DiPaola & Stronge, 2003).

In a study conducted by Horler (1996) to determine the perceptions of both Illinois superintendents and board presidents as they related to the use of criteria in evaluations, the researcher found the following criteria to be consistent in superintendent evaluations:

- promote academic rigor and excellence for staff and students;
- manage time effectively;
- describe procedures for superintendent and board of education relationships;
- write and speak forcefully;
- articulate district vision, mission, and priorities to the community and mass media;
- acquire, allocate, and manage human, material, and financial resources to effectively and accountably ensure successful student learning;
- demonstrate use of system and staff evaluation data for personnel policy and decision making;

- demonstrate personnel management strategies; and
- demonstrate ethical and personal integrity.

The findings in Horler's (1996) study revealed that most evaluation criteria had a strong focus on the management-related facets of the position. Although these identified criteria "had merit and were supported in evaluations, they tend to measure managerial skills more than they measure leadership skills" (Horler, 1996, p. 203).

Glass (1992) found that the board's primary expectations of the superintendent were general management (48.5%) and skills in human relations (43.8%). The criteria identified by superintendents surveyed in Glass's 1992 study of the superintendency evidenced this. The survey identified general effectiveness (88.3%), management functions (75.1%), and board-superintendent relationships (74.5%) as the three most important factors used in board evaluations. In addition, budget development and implementation as well as educational leadership knowledge were two other criteria most commonly used. According to Glass (1992), these criteria evidenced a lack of focus on instruction and increased academic performance by school boards. This would support the findings of the Educational Resource Services (ERS) 1989 study that revealed that only 18.6% of superintendents said that the criteria of student achievement outcomes had high importance in their most recent evaluations (Robinson & Bickers, 1990). Kerr (1994) discovered that school boards most commonly used "relations with school board" as a criterion. In addition, school boards in Iowa used three other criteria overwhelmingly when evaluating superintendents, including professional and personal characteristics (98.7%), relations with professional staff (97.3%), and public and community relations (94.7%).

In Glass, Bjork, & Brunner's 2000 study of the superintendency, superintendents indicated that boards expected them to be both education leaders (40.1%) and general managers (36.4%). This would indicate the start of the shift necessary to hold superintendents accountable for being instructional leaders. Superintendents, however, still believed that they should function as managers and attend to the day-to-day operations of the school district. According to Glass (2007), superintendents believed that they should be evaluated on the following domains:

- lead and manage personnel effectively,
- manage fiscal activities effectively,
- manage administrative and facilities functions effectively,
- foster effective community relations,
- relate effectively to school boards, and
- foster a positive district and school climate.

Myers (1993) found that both school board presidents and superintendents believed that a major source of data for superintendent evaluation could be collected at board meetings or work sessions, personal observations, informal communications, and monthly board reports.

Regardless of the criteria, conversations should occur ahead of time between the superintendent and board to clearly articulate the expectations of each party related to the evaluation process (DiPaola & Stronge, 2003; Kowalski, 2006). Unfortunately, this does not always occur. When surveyed, it was reported that only 34.9% of superintendents (Glass, 2007) believed that they were always evaluated on criteria agreed upon ahead of time. This may denote the presence of either community or intra-board politics, creating a strain in board-superintendent relations.

ISLLC Standards

In recognition of the need to improve the field of school administration, the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) created the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) in 1994 to develop standards (see Appendix E) to anchor the profession of school administration as the 21st century approached (Murphy, 2003). The ISLLC's work was guided by its response to critical questions proposed by the group in regard to leadership and district success. Murphy (2003, p. 7–17) identified the use of the following questions to guide this work:

- What do we know about schools where all youngsters achieve at high levels?
- What do we know about the actions and values of the women and men who lead effective and productive school systems?
- What trends are visible in the environment in which schooling is embedded that are likely to reshape the educational enterprise?
- What are the major changes underway in the school enterprise itself?
- What is the valued end of schooling?
- What are the valued goals of educational programs in school administration?
- What are the needs and wants of the customers of school administration programs?
- What are the expectations of resource providers?

In answering these eight questions, ISLLC produced a foundation for the profession that was quite distinct from the previous structure of administration. These standards allowed for a shift in school administration from management to educational leadership and from administration to learning, linking management and behavioral science knowledge to the larger goal of student learning (Murphy, 2003).

Development of ISSL Standards in Iowa

According to T. Fisher from the Wallace Foundation (personal communication, September 10, 2010), a task force was assembled by the School Administrators of Iowa (SAI) in 2001 to begin the work of developing a set of leadership standards for the state of Iowa. The task force was comprised of superintendents, school board association representatives, principals, and representatives from both the Iowa Department of Education and institutions of higher education. The task force was charged with consulting the research on leadership performance, with particular attention given to the work conducted by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISSLC). The task force reviewed the literature and made recommendations to a smaller task force, which completed the work that eventually became the ISSL standards used by the state of Iowa today.

In 2002–2003, the ISSL became the foundation for the development of a new evaluation system for superintendent evaluation. Superintendents and principals across the state contributed to the effort of developing a robust evaluation process centered on the work of the previous task force. Leaders from several districts contributed to the development of descriptors for the criteria developed as part of the ISSL. Additionally, the task force reviewed the work of McREL, *District leadership that works* (Marzano & Waters, 2009), and more specific descriptors were created. Representatives from the Iowa Department of Education and the Iowa Association of School Boards (IASB) contributed to the development of these specific descriptors as well. In addition, the task force developed guiding operating principles (Iowa Association of School Boards, School Administrators of Iowa, & The Wallace Foundation, 2007, p. 2) for the evaluation of the superintendent. These principles urged boards to do the following:

- link to academic, social, and emotional growth for all students in the system;

- recognize the importance of a superintendent's work in the moral dimensions of leadership in order to facilitate a better quality of life for all groups, both inside the school community and in the greater community; and
- align with the six Iowa Standards for School Leaders (ISSL).

Further, the task force developed a suggested timeline that would reflect best practice, a template for providing feedback that suggested whether the evaluatee “met standards” or “didn’t meet standards,” and sample artifacts that could be used by superintendents to provide evidence of progress toward the Standards.

These materials were shared during the 2003 IASB Annual Conference, and further refinement was made to reflect feedback given by board members at the conference. Dr. Joseph Murphy, who was instrumental in the development of the ISSLC Standards, also gave feedback.

Content of the Iowa Standards for School Leaders

According to Standard 1, instructional leaders must be committed to facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is supported by the school community. Neuman and Pelchat (2001) recognized that the core mission of the school should be to teach children well and that conversations on every level needed to be focused on and explicit about increasing student achievement. Firestone (2009) found it difficult to create a culture focused on student achievement and learning without a shared vision across the district. Cranston (2002) espoused a need for leaders to lead visioning and cultural changes necessary to improve the organization. Skrla et al. (as cited in Johnson & Uline, 2005) recognized that leaders must believe that every child can succeed. This leadership vision is necessary, but insufficient. Leaders must also nurture this disposition in others, creating belief where there is disbelief. According to Anderson, Harnisch, and Newmann, (as cited in

Murphy, Elliott, Goldring, & Porter, 2007), effective leaders facilitate the creation of a school vision that reflects high and appropriate standards of learning, a belief in the educability of all students, and high levels of personal and organizational performance. Collaborative goal setting is implemented into practice and includes all stakeholder groups. Once goals are established, they become non-negotiable as they relate to student achievement and classroom instruction. Established goals related to achievement and instruction are continually monitored by effective superintendents to ensure that these goals are the driving force behind districts' actions.

ISSL Standard 2 recognizes a need for leaders to advocate, nurture, and sustain a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth. Firestone (2009) espoused a need for districts to develop a student learning culture. In a student learning culture, there is a clear vision that facilitates a deeper integration of data use, curriculum, and professional development (Hoyle, English, & Steffy, 1998). According to Marzano, et al. (as cited in Murphy, Elliott, Goldring, & Porter, 2007), instructionally grounded leaders are catalysts in school-based efforts for continuous improvement. They understand and communicate that complacency is the enemy of improvement and that the status quo is more tightly linked to decline than to growth. These leaders confront stagnation. Daresh and Aplin (2001) found that effective superintendents carry out their educational leadership role by making it abundantly clear that the maintenance and improvement of a high-quality instructional program was to be the highest priority of the school system. Elmore (as cited in Murphy, Yff, & Shipman, 2000, p. 213) argued that the main challenge faced by educational leaders is “to reconstruct conceptions of authority, status, and school structure to make them instrumental to our most powerful conceptions of teaching and learning.”

According to Standard 3, educational leaders must ensure the management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment. Hedges, Laine, and Greenwald (as cited in Archibald, 2006) argued that more studies than not showed a positive correlation between levels of resources and the level of student learning. Ram (2004) found that the effect of expenditures, or resources, had a positive correlation with student achievement. Although the magnitude of the effect appeared to be modest, the correlation carried a high statistical significance. Odden and Busch (1998) espoused the need to boost education results through the reallocation of resources. Further, these researchers believed that educational dollars could be distributed more fairly among buildings and used more productively to dramatically improve student performance. According to Archibald (2006, p. 35), “per-pupil spending at the school level is positively related to student achievement in reading, statistically significant, and provides evidence that resources for education do matter.”

According to Standard 4, instructional leaders collaborate with families and community members, respond to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilize community resources. Marks (2001) recognized the substantial disparity among subgroups of children and suggested an alignment of superior programs, teachers, and facilities to those students with the greatest need. Doing so would enhance socioeconomically disadvantaged, disabled and minority students’ prospects for escaping the bottom of the heap educationally and thus socioeconomically. According to Murphy, Elliott, Goldring, and Porter (2007), effective leaders in high performing schools are attuned to and expert at linking schools to parents and others in the extended school community. Leadership for school improvement means working from a comprehensive design in concert with school-community relations that are anchored by the school’s academic mission (Murphy, Elliott, Goldring, & Porter, 2007).

According to Standard 5, educational leaders must act with integrity and fairness and in an ethical manner when leading their organizations. This means that leaders treat others fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect. In addition, they establish the expectation that others in the school community will act in a similar manner (Murphy, Elliott, Goldring, & Porter, 2007). Leading an organization as a servant of the learning community allows the leader to promote integrity, fairness, and ethics in his or her leadership. Murphy, Yff, and Shipman (2000) espoused leadership grounded more in teaching than in informing, more in learning than in knowing, and more in modeling and clarifying values and beliefs than in telling people what to do. This approach to leadership fosters relationships built on trust. Stilwell (2003) found five qualities that high-trust cultures generally acknowledge and reward. They include competence, openness and honesty, concern for employees, reliability, and identification or sharing of common goals, values, and beliefs. As moral educators, leaders of tomorrow's schools will need to be much more heavily invested in establishing purposes than in simply managing existing arrangements (Murphy, Yff, & Shipman, 2000). This approach includes a sensitivity of leaders to the goal of equal educational opportunities for all. The actions of administrators should be deeply intertwined with critical and ethical issues of education (Murphy, Yff, & Shipman, 2000).

Finally, Standard 6 recognizes the need for superintendents to understand, respond to, and influence the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context. Marks (2001) believed that with today's society facing a plethora of difficult economic, social, energy, and environmental problems, superintendents must serve as societal architects. This role lies in the ability to manage and shape the environment in new directions relative to curriculum and programs, to utilize varied marketing techniques, to integrate effective human relations skills, to seek out new and varied funding techniques, and to establish a philosophy of education,

including a broader definition of schooling that encompasses service to and for the community. Daresh and Aplin (2001) recognized that effective superintendents form relationships with external agencies. Linkages with state legislators, the state education agency, and local politicians were maintained in a way that allowed the superintendent to influence the decision-making process, anticipate trends, and offer opportunities for pilot-testing new ideas and practices. Murphy, Yff, and Shipman (2000) recognized the need for leaders of tomorrow's schools to address the rapidly changing complexion of society and to come to terms with the changing social context of education. The Council of Chief State School Officers (as cited in Murphy, Elliott, Goldring, & Porter, 2007) believed one of the defining characteristics of improvement-oriented leaders to be that they understand, respond to, and influence the larger political, social, economic, legal and cultural context of schooling to promote the success of all students.

Broad themes run through the six standards. Educational Testing Services has identified four recurring themes that include the following: a vision for success, a focus on teaching and learning, involvement of all stakeholders, and demonstration of ethical behavior. The Council of Chief State School Officers (as cited in Hessel & Holloway, 2002, p. 20) believed that the ISLLC Standards themselves are envisioned as presenting "a common core of knowledge, dispositions, and performances that will help link leadership more forcefully to productive schools and enhanced educational outcomes."

Summary

"The process of evaluating a superintendent is a very important tool in the entire improvement effort of a school district. It defines expectations, enhances communication, prioritizes district goals and supports the board of education to focus its

attention on holding the superintendent accountable for improving the achievement of all students” (Iowa Association of School Boards, School Administrators of Iowa, & The Wallace Foundation, 2007, p. 2).

This chapter reviewed the literature that describes the purpose of superintendent evaluation, the errors and omissions that frequently occur in the process, and the limited studies available concerning the evaluation process. Additionally, it discussed resources highlighting the use of personnel standards to conduct effective evaluations as well as current evaluation models. The leadership standards developed by ISLLC and modified by SAI led to a collaborative system of superintendent evaluation for the purpose of improving the superintendent’s performance, as well as that of the system as a whole, so that student achievement increases.

Chapter 3

METHOD

The federal mandate, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, has forced school districts across the country to examine their current practices. They have sought ways to improve their organizations in order to increase student achievement and to prepare all students for our changing world. This legislation has dramatically changed the way school districts do business and has created a new system of accountability for all schools. A new form of leadership must emerge to manage these organizations and to address the challenges associated with this mandate. As cited in Chapter 1 of this study, Marzano and Waters (2009) discovered specific actions and behaviors of district leaders that correlate with increased student achievement. The superintendent plays a critical role in districts' efforts to boost student achievement and to recognize the level of performance necessary to deem learners "successful." The board of education has a responsibility to the community that it serves to ensure that the superintendent engages in actions and behaviors that contribute to increased student performance. The evaluation system, or performance appraisal, can significantly impact the way a superintendent operates. The components of a review, including the job description, the individual professional development plan, and the instrument used to evaluate the superintendent, should focus on instructional leadership actions and behaviors.

This study utilizes the method of content analysis to obtain descriptive information about the superintendent evaluation process in Iowa. Specifically, the researcher wanted to investigate whether the job descriptions, Individual Administrator Professional Development Plans (IAPDPs), and evaluation instruments used to evaluate superintendents of schools in Iowa

reflected the Iowa Standards for School Leaders (ISSL) and their criteria related to instructional leadership. This chapter reviews the research questions posed in Chapter 1, explains the data collection procedures used in both the pilot and the study, describes the methods used to analyze the data, and outlines the limitations of the study.

Research Questions

The study addresses the following research questions:

- 1) Do the job descriptions, IAPDPs, and evaluation instruments used to evaluate superintendents in the state of Iowa reflect actions and behaviors associated with instructional leadership as reflected in the ISSL?
 - a) Do the roles and expectations outlined in superintendents' job descriptions reflect the leadership standard related to instructional leadership?
 - b) Do the goals developed by superintendents as part of their IAPDPs reflect the leadership standard related to instructional leadership?
 - c) Do the criteria identified in the superintendent evaluation instruments reflect the leadership standard related to instructional leadership?
- 2) Does the size of the school district affect the level of congruence of job descriptions, evaluation instruments, and IAPDPs with the ISSL and their criteria related to instructional leadership?
- 3) What is the level of congruence of the evaluation instruments used to evaluate superintendents, the superintendents' job descriptions, and their IAPDPs, with the identified ISSL standards and their criteria associated with instructional leadership?

Content Analysis

As part of the study, the researcher examined written job descriptions, IAPDPs, and evaluation instruments. It seemed appropriate to employ the qualitative technique of content analysis since it is the research methodology best suited for analyzing written forms of communication (Berg, 2001; Borg & Gall, 1989; Carney, 1972; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Krippendorff, 2004). According to Neuendorf (2002, p. 27), content analysis has “a long history of use in communication, journalism, sociology, psychology and business.” Further, a growing number of researchers over the last several decades have used this methodology with increasing frequency. According to Borg and Gall (1989), the use of content analysis in educational research can answer questions directly relating to the materials being analyzed. This analysis can then produce descriptive information related to those materials, thus achieving the objective of this methodology (Borg & Gall, 1989). Additionally, Borg and Gall (1989, p. 525) espoused a need to develop a coding or classification system for analyzing content and advised researchers, “when possible, [to] use a coding system that has already been developed in previous research.” The methodology of this study is modeled after an earlier study completed by Fisher (1995) that investigated the congruence between hiring criteria for superintendents in Iowa and the characteristics of transformational leadership.

Fisher (1995) used the processes espoused by Krippendorff (2004) as a guide for the development of her study. The steps of the process include two categories. In the first category, the data-making phase of content analysis, Fisher (1995, p. 79) included the following steps:

1. choosing a sample,
2. defining recording units,
3. developing precise recording directions for all of the coders to use,

4. assessing the congruence of the primary researcher's coding with the results of the other coders to determine the reliability of results, and
5. sorting the context units by categories germane to the analysis portion of the study.

The second phase included making “inferences about the data based on the type of analytic construct used” (Fisher, 1995, p. 79). These steps were considered in both the pilot study and the actual study.

Conducting the Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted in order to determine the adequacy of the context units used and to check for inter-rater reliability in the coding. The study's reliability is strengthened by both adequate context units and a system of checking coding procedures.

To complete the pilot study, the researcher elected to use a random sample from the population included in the study. In order to determine a sample population, the researcher relied upon the Iowa High School Athletic Association (IHSAA)'s use of the 2009–2010 Basic Education Data System (BEDS) report. Using the data from the BEDS report, the IHSAA classifies school districts according to their high school enrollments in descending order for the purpose of sports competitions in each school year. The sample population for this study included schools classified as Class 3A and 4A for football for the 2010–2011 school year. Class 4A includes districts that have high school enrollments of 700 or more. The next 64 high schools on the list, all of which have lower high school enrollments, are in Class 3A. Using this classification system allowed the researcher to identify school districts with the largest enrollments. The two subgroups, Class 3A and Class 4A, represented Iowa school districts with K–12 enrollments of approximately 1000–9000 students. Two districts were chosen from the selected population to participate in the pilot study.

Once two districts were identified for the pilot study, the superintendents of the districts were contacted by e-mail and asked to participate in the pilot study (see Appendix F). Contact information for the superintendents in districts around the state of Iowa can be found on the Iowa Department of Education website. The electronic mailing included a cover letter describing the study's significance, assurances of confidentiality, and a request for each participant to send an electronic copy of his or her job description, IAPDP, and the evaluation instrument used to evaluate him or her during the 2009–2010 school year. Additionally, a letter of support was included from SAI to garner additional support for the study (see Appendix G) and to encourage subjects to participate in the pilot study.

Once submitted by the superintendent participants of the study, the three documents requested by the researcher (job description, IAPDP, and evaluation instrument) were immediately coded. When conducting content analysis, the researcher typically treats the data as manifest or latent content. According to Gray & Densten (as cited in Neuendorf, 2002), manifest data refers to the literal interpretation of the data or “elements that are physically present and countable.” Conversely, latent data refers to the deeper meaning of the message. Different readers may make varying inferences and interpretations of the text (Neuendorf, 2002).

Criticism has been directed at dependence on the manifest-latent dichotomy. Neuendorf (2002, p. 23) suggested the use of a continuum from “highly manifest” to “highly latent” when considering content. This study utilized this “continuum” approach. As part of this study, coding was conducted using manifest measurement.

The sampling units were coded into recording units. The recording units were words or phrases that described superintendents' actions or behaviors, specified certain roles, or outlined board members' expectations. The researcher modified the directions provided in “Instructions

for Creating Recording Units from Sampling Units” in Fisher’s (1995) study (see Appendix H). These directions aided the researcher in identifying recording units for this study. Typically, sampling units are too large and complex to be analyzed and need to be broken down into recording units to make analysis more manageable. These recording units were then assigned to context units.

The researcher used the Iowa Standards for School Leaders (ISSL) and the criteria identified within the Standards in creating the context units. This is the best fit for this study considering that the study is limited to Iowa. It is also suitable because during the 2007 legislative session, the Iowa Legislature enacted SF 277 (2007), requiring superintendents to be evaluated against the ISSL. This is evidenced in the provision of Iowa Code entitled Administrator Quality Program (2007), which mandates that administrators be evaluated against these Standards. It also supports the professional development of administrators as identified in their IAPDPs. Additionally, in Continuing Contract For Administrators (1987), Iowa Code requires boards of education to develop job descriptions for all supervisory positions within their districts. The ISSL standards and their criteria are embedded in the Superintendent Leadership Performance Review that was developed by and for Iowa school leaders with support from the IASB, SAI, and the Wallace Foundation.

For purposes of this study, each of the six ISSL standards represented a context unit. In addition, the criteria contained within the standards were considered in an attempt to make a tighter match between the recording unit and the context unit. Each recording unit was assigned a number that correlated with an ISSL standard, for example, (1), (2), (3). When possible, it was also coded to the criteria—for example, (a), (b), (c). Instructions for coding recording units into context units were given to the coders during their training (see Appendix I).

The ISSL are research-based and comprehensive. The pilot study helped to establish that the standards and criteria in the ISSL were sufficient to categorize all of the recording units.

The data were organized into an Excel spreadsheet that listed the recording units separately and that also coded each one with a number to indicate the sampling unit from which it was derived. The recording unit was assigned a context unit that corresponded to the ISSL standard and criteria. The data collected and coded from the pilot study were not included in the analysis conducted as part of the study. The pilot was conducted in order to validate the context units, ensure inter-rater reliability, test the utility of the descriptors used to guide the coding of recording units into context units, and resolve any unforeseen issues with the research methodology.

Description of the Study Population

The research was limited to school superintendents in the state of Iowa. According to the Department of Education, there are 361 school districts in the state of Iowa. Unfortunately, this population was too large, so a sample was taken. Borg and Gall (1989) espoused a need to develop a data-sampling plan to reduce the content to be analyzed to a manageable size. The sampling plan employed the use of stratified samples. According to Krippendorff (2004, p. 66), stratified sampling recognizes “several distinct subpopulations within a population, called strata.” Further, each sampling unit belongs to one stratum only. The study focused on two subpopulations of all superintendents in Iowa, and a random number table was used to determine a random sample within each stratum.

Superintendents serving in school districts classified as 3A or 4A, as described above, were eligible for this study with the exception of the “Urban 8.” The Urban 8 includes school districts across the state with multiple high schools within their systems. These districts were not

included in the study due to the unique dynamics of a multiple high school system. Such districts are not representative of the state of Iowa. In districts smaller than the 3A size category, the superintendent may perform other duties, such as those of curriculum coordinator, special education director, principal and/or athletic director. By choosing this sample population for this study, the researcher attempted to isolate the independent variables associated with multiple high school districts and districts with fewer than 1000 students.

Collection of Data

As in the pilot, a random number table was used to identify participants in the study. Twenty school districts were chosen, with ten participants in each of the two strata identified. A cover letter similar to the one used in the pilot study was sent electronically to the participants. The researcher made follow-up phone calls to encourage participation from the respondent superintendents.

Data Reliability Analysis

Once the documents were received from the participants, the sampling units were divided into recording units. The researcher used the same process employed by Fisher (1995, p. 91–92) for testing the reliability of the process of identifying recording units:

Coder A worked from a printed copy of each district's sampling units and highlighted each recording unit, using a different colored highlighter pen to distinguish one recording unit from another. Coder B was given a training session that included receipt of the Instructions for Creating Recording Units From Sampling Units, a verbal explanation of the intent of the study and an opportunity to ask clarifying questions. Coder B was then given a print copy of a randomly sampled 10% of the districts hiring criteria and Coder B also highlighted each recording unit, using a different colored highlighter to distinguish

one recording unit from another. The results of the two coders' work were compared to establish reliability of the process of identifying recording units from sampling units. The researcher then determined acceptable levels of agreement. Reliability coefficients of .80 are acceptable in most circumstances (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Neuendorf, 2002). In consideration of this, the researcher set the reliability level for this study at 80% agreement.

The literature shares a variety of coefficients available for reporting levels of agreement and reports simple agreement as one of the most widely used. In consideration of this, the researcher plans to use Holsti's method, as described by Neuendorf (2002), to determine agreement between the coders. The formula for Holsti's method appears as follows: $PA_O = 2A/(n_A + n_B)$: "Where PA_O stands for 'proportion of agreement, observed,' A is the number of agreements between two coders, and n_A and n_B are the number of units coded by coders A and B, respectively" (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 149).

The recording units were organized on an Excel spreadsheet. The recording units were listed separately and coded with "JD" for job description, "IAPDP" for Individual Administrator Professional Development Plan, and "EI" for evaluation instrument. Additionally, each unit was numbered "4A" or "3A" to indicate which district size it represented.

The coders received training prior to participating in the coding process. Coders were given the Instructions for Coding Recording Units Into Context Units (Fisher, 1995), the ISSL standards and criteria listed in SAI's Superintendent Leadership Performance Review, a verbal explanation of the study, and an opportunity to ask clarifying questions. Once coding was completed, the agreement coefficient was determined. There were 106 recording units created from the six sample units. Agreement between the researcher and coder A was 92%. The agreement between the researcher and coder B was 91%. The agreement between coder A and

coder B was determined to be 84%. All of the coefficients between coders were above the desired 80%.

Limitations of the Study

The study is limited to superintendents in the state of Iowa serving in class 3A or 4A districts with K–12 enrollments of approximately 1000 to 9000 students. Generalizations cannot be made to districts in Iowa of smaller or larger size or districts in other parts of the nation.

This study analyzes only the written job descriptions and evaluation instruments used by boards of education. It does not determine whether the board actually uses these documents to conduct performance reviews.

The research analyzes only the written IAPDPs of the subjects. It does not determine whether a subject was successful in implementing the plan or whether the board used the developed plan as part of the performance review process.

The study is limited to the content of the material contained within the documents analyzed. Other aspects of the evaluation process may exist that were not shared by respondents.

Current research does not provide a benchmark for the number of criteria that should be coded as instructional leadership in order to indicate that instructional leadership is a priority of school districts.

There is a certain amount of subjectivity that occurs during the coding process. This process may rely on a coder's experiences and knowledge for interpretation of text.

Chapter 4

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

This study was designed to examine the congruence between the Iowa Standards for School Leaders (ISSL) and the evaluation criteria used by boards of education to evaluate school superintendents. As part of this study, a request was made to superintendents serving in Iowa to provide job descriptions, evaluation instruments, and performance goals. Using content analysis, criteria contained within these documents were coded to identify those that described actions and behaviors associated with instructional leadership, as outlined by the ISSL described in Chapter 2. The criteria were disaggregated and sorted by district size to further study the relationship of the three documents within each reporting district.

This chapter presents the results of the analysis of data with a description of the sample and context units. The most common method of summarizing content-analysis data is through the use of absolute frequencies, such as the numbers of specific incidents found in the data, and relative frequencies, such as the proportion of particular events to total events (Borg & Gall, 1989). In answering each of the research questions proposed in this study, this chapter presents data in frequency counts and proportions.

Description of the Sample

The sample population included all school districts in the state of Iowa classified as 3A or 4A in high school football—in other words, the categories indicating districts with the largest high school enrollments—as reported by the Iowa High School Athletic Association (IHSAA) for the 2009–2010 school year. The sample population did not include districts from the Urban 8 as these districts have the unique dynamic of a multiple high school system and as such are not representative of the state of Iowa. Therefore, the sample population included 86 eligible

districts in the state of Iowa. Using a random number table, 20 districts from the sample population were selected to participate in the study. Of the 20 districts invited to participate, 18 superintendents responded, which represented a return rate of 90%. One district (5%) declined to participate in the study, and one district (5%) accepted the invitation to participate but never submitted the requested documents. Ten responders represented districts in Class 3A and eight represented districts in Class 4A.

Description of Criteria Use

Eighteen of the 18 responders (100%) submitted their board-approved job descriptions as well as the evaluation instruments used to evaluate their performance during their most recent reviews. Additionally, 16 of the 18 (89%) responders submitted documentation of the goals that they had written for themselves as part of their individual professional development plans. The two responders who did not submit goals were not comfortable sharing their goals. Therefore, 52 sampling units of criteria were analyzed in this study. Of the 18 job descriptions submitted, 518 recording units were created. In addition, 87 recording units were created from the 16 sampling units of goals, and another 582 recording units were created from the 18 evaluation instruments submitted by the responders. As a result, a total of 1187 context units were created from the 52 sampling units submitted by the responders.

Differences in Sampling Units

The raw data indicated a significant variance in the recording units within the job description sampling units. The number of recording units from the job description samples ranged from 14–70, with a mean of 29 and a median of 25. One sampling unit in particular, the eighth subject in the 4A schools, was an extreme outlier in this study, with 70 recording units. Of the 70 recording units, 56 (80%) were management tasks, including such things as “To

prepare and distribute the ‘Directory’ each year” and “To announce cancellation of school or early dismissal to area radio stations.” These recording units and many others contained in this sampling unit were not representative of most of the job description sampling units in this study.

The range of recording units for the goals written by superintendents was 2–12, with a mean of 5 and a median of 5. The third subject from the 3A schools was an extreme outlier in this study, with 12 goals articulated in a numbered list. Additionally, several of the recording units in this sample were tasks rather than goals. Examples include working on employee handbook or work rules, working with the school improvement director to prepare for an upcoming Department of Education site visit, and implementing the Healthy Kids Act throughout the district. These tasks were not framed in goal language related to the development of Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound SMART goals to improve student learning (O’Neill & Conzemius, 2006).

There was a significant difference in the evaluation instrument sampling units. The range for the evaluation instrument samples was 6–57, with a mean of 32 and a median of 35. Three of the sampling units, the first and sixth subject in the 3A schools and the third subject in the 4A schools, were extreme outliers in this sampling unit. In contrast to the other 16 sampling units, these two instruments focused specifically on the superintendent’s attainment of the goals articulated in their individual professional development plans. Subsequently, they were narrow in scope and did not reflect the comprehensive approach to evaluation that the other 16 represented.

Formats of the Sampling Units

Seventeen (94%) of the 18 job descriptions included a bulleted or numbered list of short statements of responsibilities or duties expected of the superintendent. One (6%) of the 18 was

merely a listing of the ISSL standards. Eight (44%) of the 18 sampling units were board policies that were part of the districts' 300-series policies, which address personnel concerns.

Fourteen (88%) of the 16 sampling units for goals included specific leadership goals in the form of SMART goals (O'Neill & Conzemius, 2006), although none of them included all five components associated with goal development. Five (31%) of the samples listed tasks for the superintendent to complete rather than, or in addition to, specific leadership goals. Only 63% (10) of the sampling units included progress checks or indicators of progress toward meeting the outlined goals, and only six (38%) included action steps toward achievement of the outlined goals. The same six sampling units that included action steps were the only samples to use the Individual Administrator Professional Development Plan (IAPDP) template that was created and offered by School Administrators of Iowa (SAI).

The ISSL were represented in 15 (83%) of the evaluation instrument sampling units. Of those 15 sampling units, 13 (87%) used "meets" or "doesn't meet" as an indicator of performance on a given standard. Additionally, those samples included sections in which the evaluator was to provide written comments and to provide evidence that indicated success or failure in meeting the standard. Four (22%) of the 18 recording units used rating scales from 1–3 and 1–5. These rating scales were used to rate the superintendent on goal attainment, performance on the ISSL, and other indicators. Finally, one sampling unit used a grading scale of A, "exemplary," through F, "not happening."

Analysis of the Data

Each of the 1187 recording units was coded to one of the ISSL standards. In addition, these recording units were coded to specific criteria contained in the standards when possible. The items coded to Standard 1 were related to the superintendent's creating a shared vision.

Examples of items coded as Standard 1 included collaborating with others to establish goals, using research and best practice in improving educational programs, promoting high expectations for teaching and learning, aligning programming with district vision and goals, providing leadership during change efforts, and communicating to stakeholders regarding progress toward goals. Forty-eight of the 52 documents included at least one criterion that was coded Standard 1.

Standard 2 items were related to the superintendent's ability to create a culture of learning by serving as an instructional leader. Examples of items coded as Standard 2 included providing leadership in improving climate and culture; providing opportunities for teachers to improve their teaching craft to benefit all students; evaluating effectiveness of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; evaluating staff and providing coaching; providing professional development that directly enhances teaching and learning; promoting collaboration; being a life-long learner; and being visible in the learning community. Forty-seven of the 52 documents included at least one criterion that was coded Standard 2.

The items coded to Standard 3 were related to the superintendent's management of the district. Some examples of items coded to Standard 3 included complying with state and local mandates and policies, selecting staff, addressing issues in a timely manner, managing all fiscal and physical resources efficiently, and communicating with stakeholders about the operations of the school. Fifty of the 52 documents included at least one criterion that was coded Standard 3.

Items coded to Standard 4 represented the superintendent's ability to connect with families and community. Examples of items coded to Standard 4 included engaging the family by promoting shared responsibility, promoting family involvement in the educational system, connecting families with services that support a focus on learning, and welcoming and honoring

families. Twenty-nine of the 52 documents included at least one criterion that was coded Standard 4.

The ethical and professional behaviors of the superintendent are evaluated using Standard 5. This includes items related to the superintendent's integrity and character. Examples include demonstrating ethical and professional behavior; inspiring others to higher levels of performance through one's own attitudes, beliefs, and values; fostering caring relationships with staff; demonstrating appreciation; and sensitivity to diversity and respecting divergent opinions. Twenty-two of the 52 documents included at least one criterion that was coded Standard 5.

Last, items coded to Standard 6 included those in the societal context of the superintendent's position. Examples of items coded to Standard 6 include collaborating with service providers to improve teaching and learning, and advocating for the district and welfare of all members of the learning community. Thirty-three of the 52 documents included at least one criterion that was coded Standard 6.

The analysis of data allowed the researcher to address the research questions proposed in this study. The data were reported in both frequency distributions and percentage distributions to determine the level of congruency of the recording units with each of the six context units, and, more specifically, with criteria associated with instructional leadership.

Research Questions

Research Question 1. Do the job descriptions, IAPDPs, and evaluation instruments used to evaluate superintendents in the state of Iowa reflect the actions and behaviors associated with instructional leadership described in the ISSL?

- a) Do the roles and expectations outlined in job descriptions reflect the leadership standard related to instructional leadership?

- b) Do the goals developed by superintendents as part of IAPDPs reflect the leadership standard related to instructional leadership?
- c) Do the criteria identified in superintendent evaluation instruments reflect the leadership standard related to instructional leadership?

Figure 1 presents the distribution of the job description criteria into the six context units by frequency.

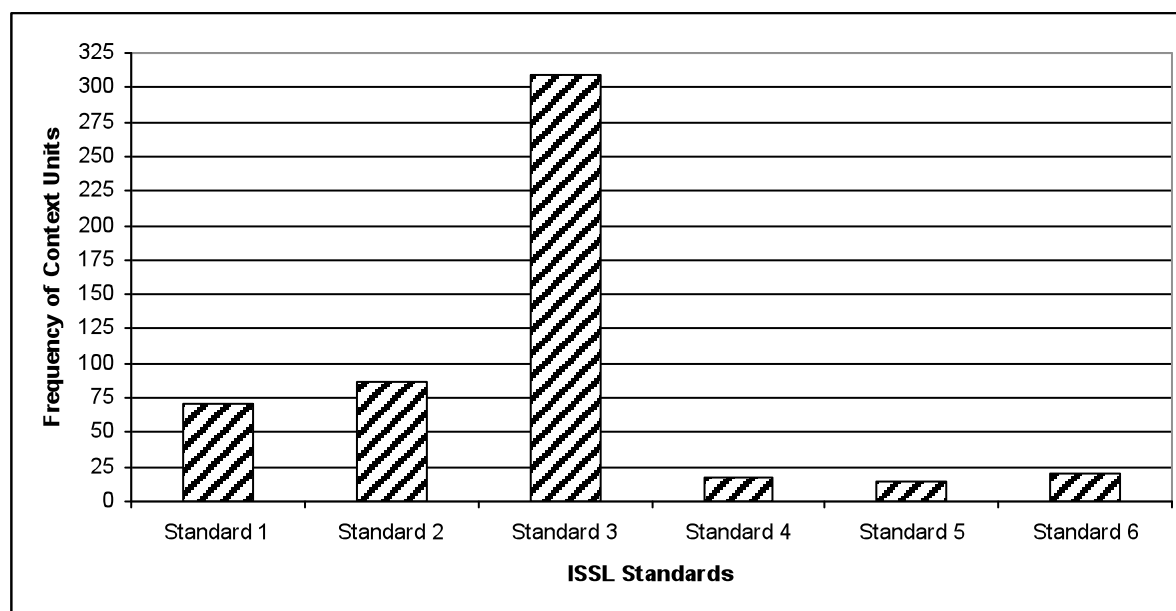


Figure 1. Distribution of context units for job descriptions.

A majority of the districts (72%) had job descriptions that contained at least one criterion that reflected Standard 2 instructional leadership actions and behaviors. However, of the 518 recording units, only 86 were coded as Standard 2. The majority of recording units (309) were coded to Standard 3. Standard 1 accounted for 71 recording units, while Standards 4–6 represented 17, 15, and 20 of the criteria contained in the job descriptions respectively.

Figure 2 depicts the distribution of the job description criteria into the six context units by percentage.

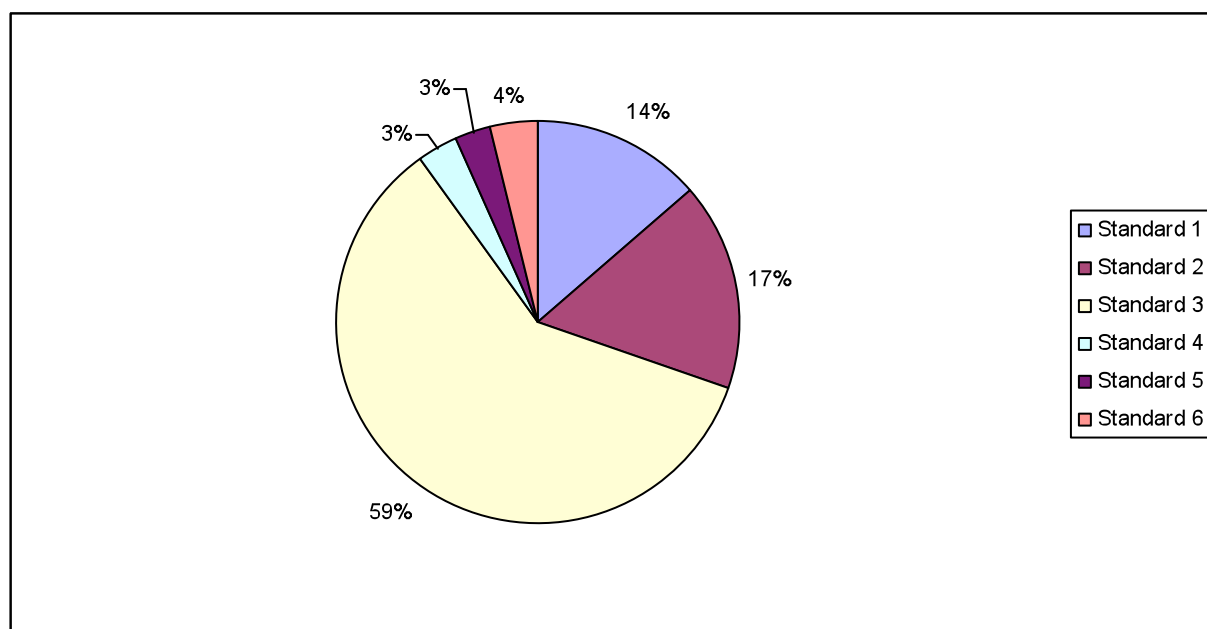


Figure 2. Percentage distribution of context units for job descriptions.

The items in the job descriptions coded to Standard 2 represented 17% of the total number of recording units. Items coded to Standard 3 represented a majority of recording units, with 59% of all units coded to Standard 3. Considering that only 17% of the 518 recording units in the job descriptions were coded to Standard 2 and were reflective of instructional leadership, there was little congruence between the job descriptions and the criteria associated with instructional leadership.

Figure 3 represents the distribution of the goal criteria into the six context units by frequency.

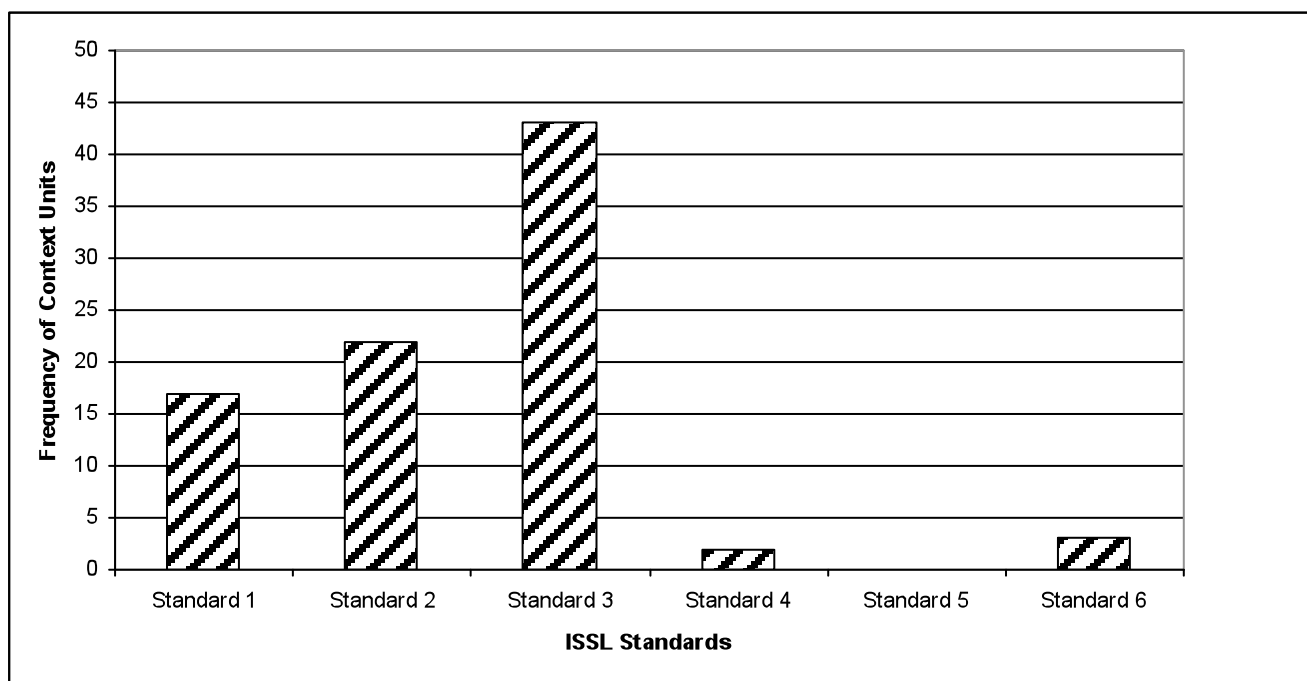


Figure 3. Distribution of context units for goals written by superintendents.

A majority of the districts (68%) had goals that contained at least one criterion that reflected Standard 2 instructional leadership actions and behaviors. Of the 87 recording units, 22 were coded as Standard 2 of the ISSL. Forty-three recording units were coded to Standard 3 of the ISSL and represented the majority of all recording units for the goals. Standard 1 accounted for 17, and Standards 4–6 represented 2, 0, and 3 of the criteria contained in the goals respectively.

Figure 4 presents the distribution of the goal criteria into the six context units by percentage.

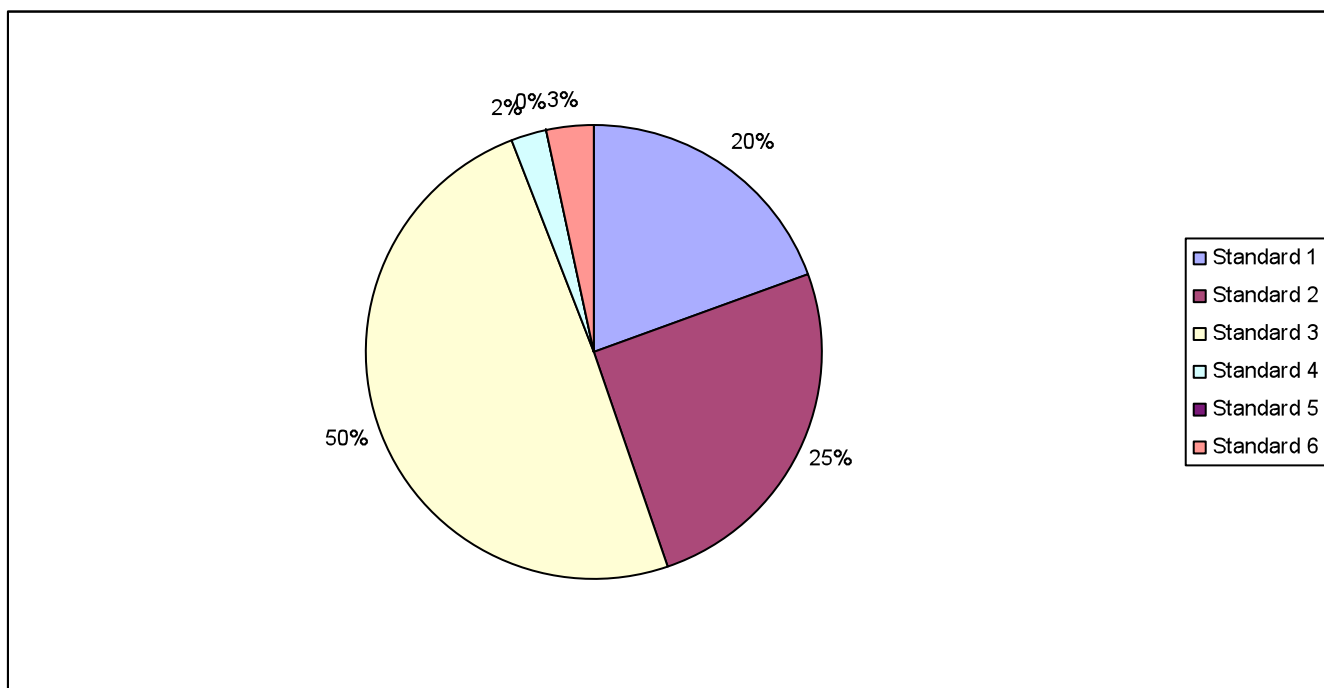


Figure 4. Percentage distribution of context units for goals written by superintendents.

Twenty-five percent of the 87 goals written by superintendents as part of their IAPDPs were coded to Standard 2 of the ISSL. The majority of goals (50%) were coded to Standard 3 of the ISSL. Considering that only 25% of the goals developed by superintendents focused on Standard 2 of the ISSL, the goals were not congruent to the criteria related to instructional leadership.

Figure 5 depicts the distribution of the evaluation instrument criteria into the six context units by percentage. Nine (50%) of the districts reported using the SAI model evaluation instrument as part of their superintendent evaluation process. The evaluation instruments were sorted to see if there was any difference between the SAI model instrument and those developed by districts.

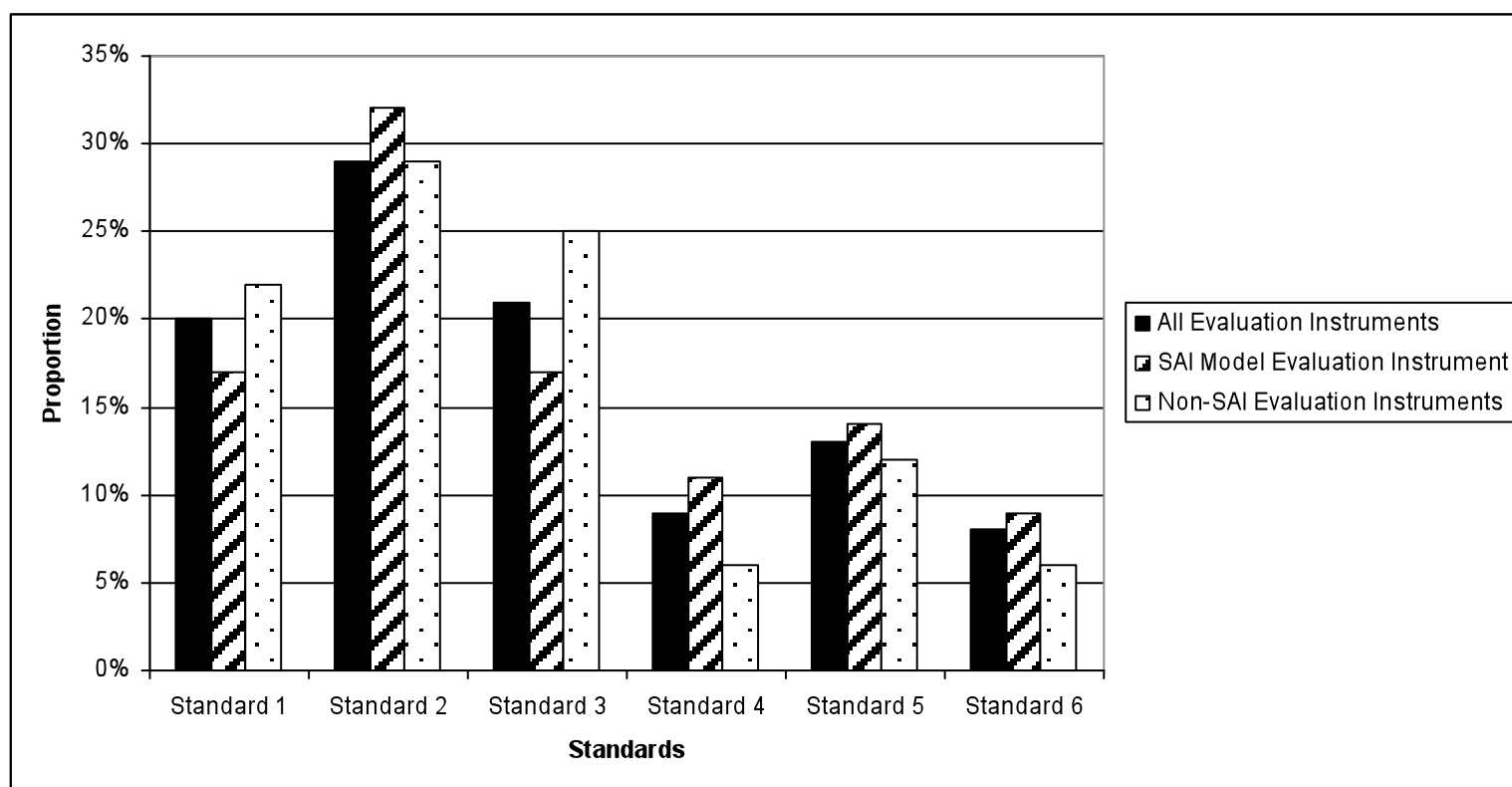


Figure 5. Distribution of context units for evaluation instruments.

A majority of the districts (68%) had evaluation instruments that contained at least one criterion that reflected Standard 2 instructional leadership actions and behaviors. Of the 582 recording units, 175 (29%) were coded as Standard 2 of the ISSL. Criteria in Standard 3 contained 120 (21%) of the total number of recording units. Standard 1 accounted for 114 units

(29%), and Standards 4–6 represented 52 (9%), 77 (13%) and 44 (8%) of the criteria contained in the evaluation instruments respectively.

Figure 6 represents the proportion of evaluation instruments used by school districts that used the ISSL as criteria in their evaluation instruments.

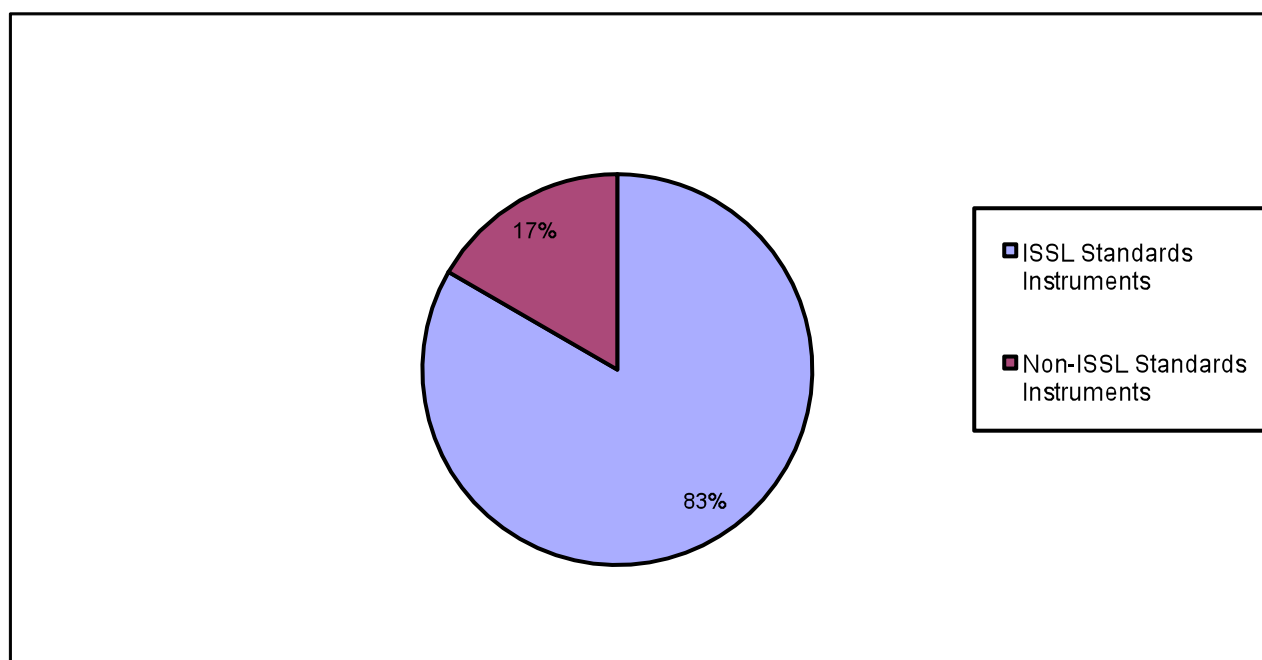


Figure 6. Percentage of evaluation instruments based on ISSL standards.

Fifteen (83%) of the 18 evaluation instruments analyzed used the ISSL as criteria for the evaluation. Two instruments (13%) of those 15 included criteria in addition to the ISSL criteria.

Figure 7 presents the distribution of the evaluation instrument criteria into the six context units by percentage.

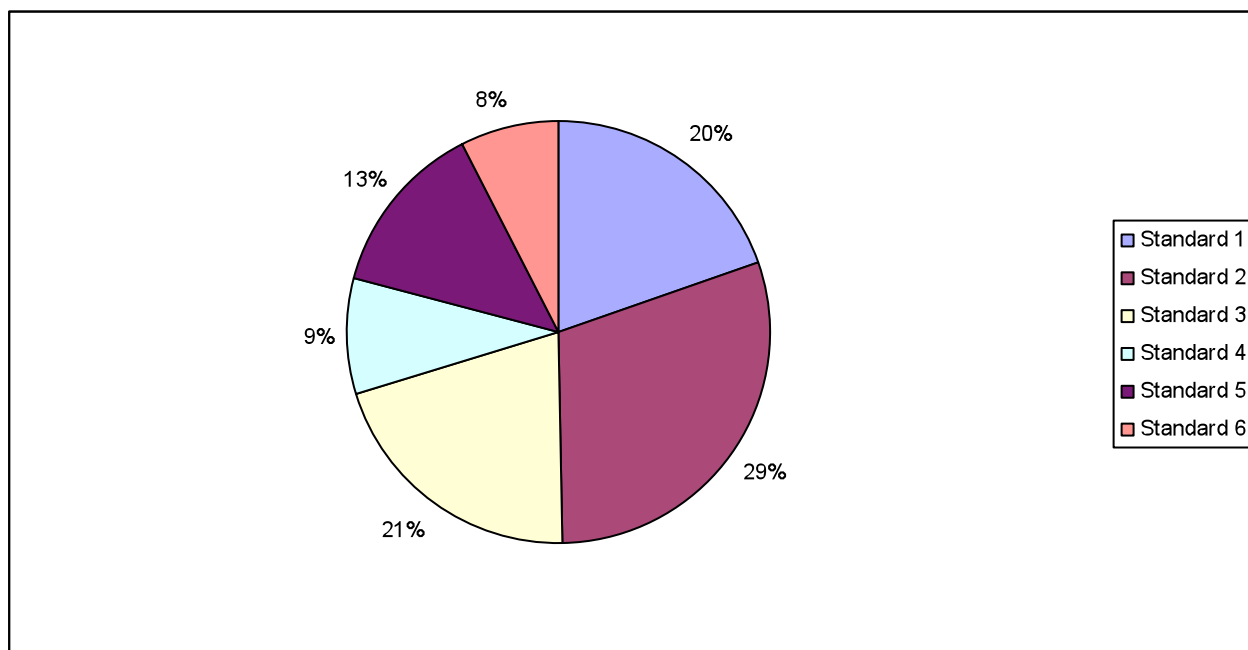


Figure 7. Percentage distribution of context units for evaluation instruments.

Twenty-nine percent of the recording units contained in the evaluation instruments were coded to Standard 2. Eleven (31%) of the 35 criteria in the ISSL were aligned to Standard 2 and instructional leadership. Using this as a baseline, the 29% of recording units in the evaluation instruments aligned with this proportion of criteria focused on instructional leadership as part of a comprehensive evaluation instrument.

Research Question 2. Does the size of the school district have any affect on the level of congruence between job descriptions, evaluation instruments, and goals written by superintendents, and the ISSL standards and their criteria associated with instructional leadership?

Figure 8 depicts the distribution of context units for the job descriptions sorted by school size.

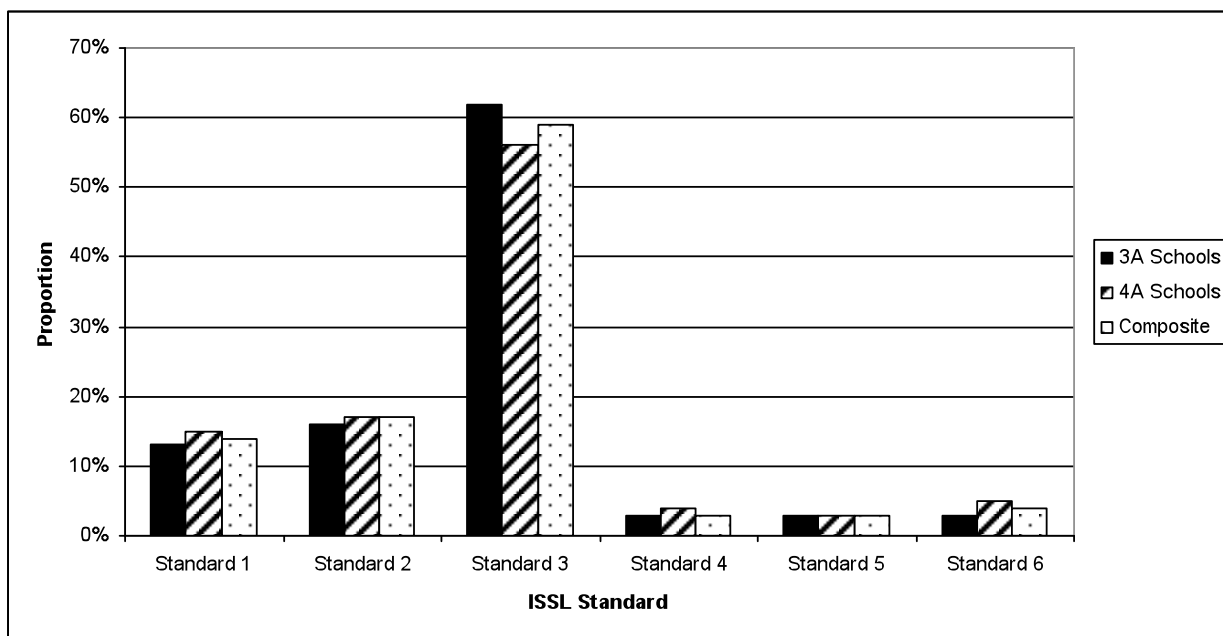


Figure 8. Percentage distribution of context units for job descriptions by school size.

The percentage of recording units coded to Standard 2 of the ISSL in 3A districts was 16%. In comparison, 17% of the recording units in 4A districts' job descriptions were coded to Standard 2. There was little difference between 3A and 4A schools in relation to recording units contained in the job descriptions that were congruent with instructional leadership.

Figure 9 represents the distribution of context units for the goals written by superintendents, sorted by school size.

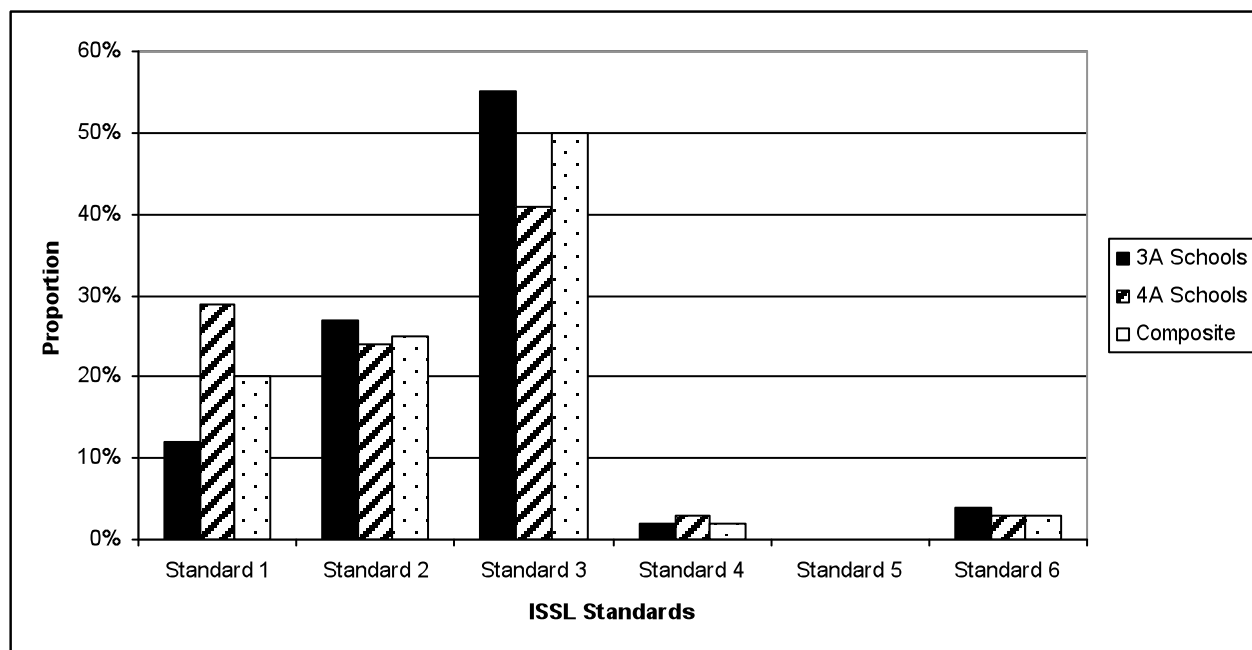


Figure 9. Percentage distribution of context units for goals written by superintendents, by school size.

Twenty-seven percent of the goals written by superintendents in 3A districts were coded to Standard 2. In comparison, 24% of the goals written by superintendents in 4A districts were coded to Standard 2. The differently sized schools demonstrated little divergence in the percentage of recording units contained in the goals congruent with instructional leadership that their superintendents wrote.

Figure 10 presents the distribution of context units for the evaluation instruments, sorted by school size.

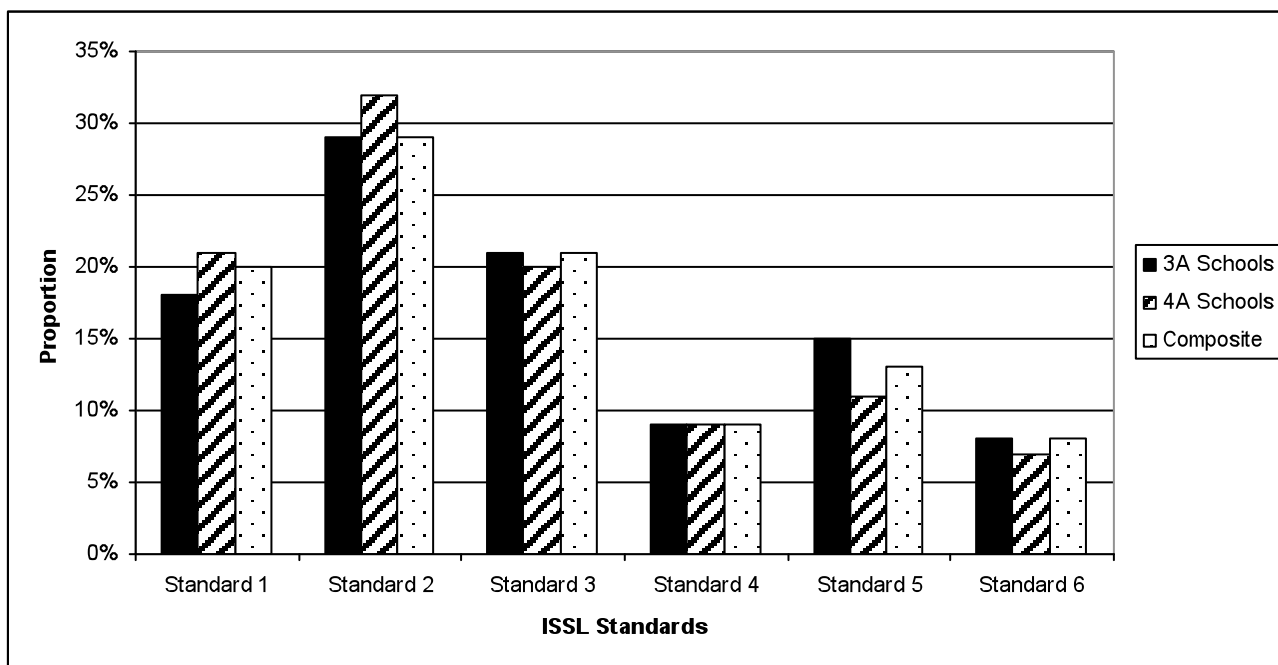


Figure 10. Percentage distribution of context units for evaluation instruments by school size.

The recording units coded to Standard 2 in the evaluation instruments for 3A districts represented 29% of all the units. This compares to the 32% of recording units coded to Standard 2 in 4A districts. Therefore, the size of the school district made little difference in the proportion of evaluation instrument recording units coded to Standard 2.

Research Question 3. What is the level of congruence of the evaluation instruments used to evaluate superintendents, the job descriptions of those superintendents, and the IAPDPs with the identified ISSL standards and their criteria associated with instructional leadership?

Figure 11 represents a comparison of the context units for all three of the recording sample types.

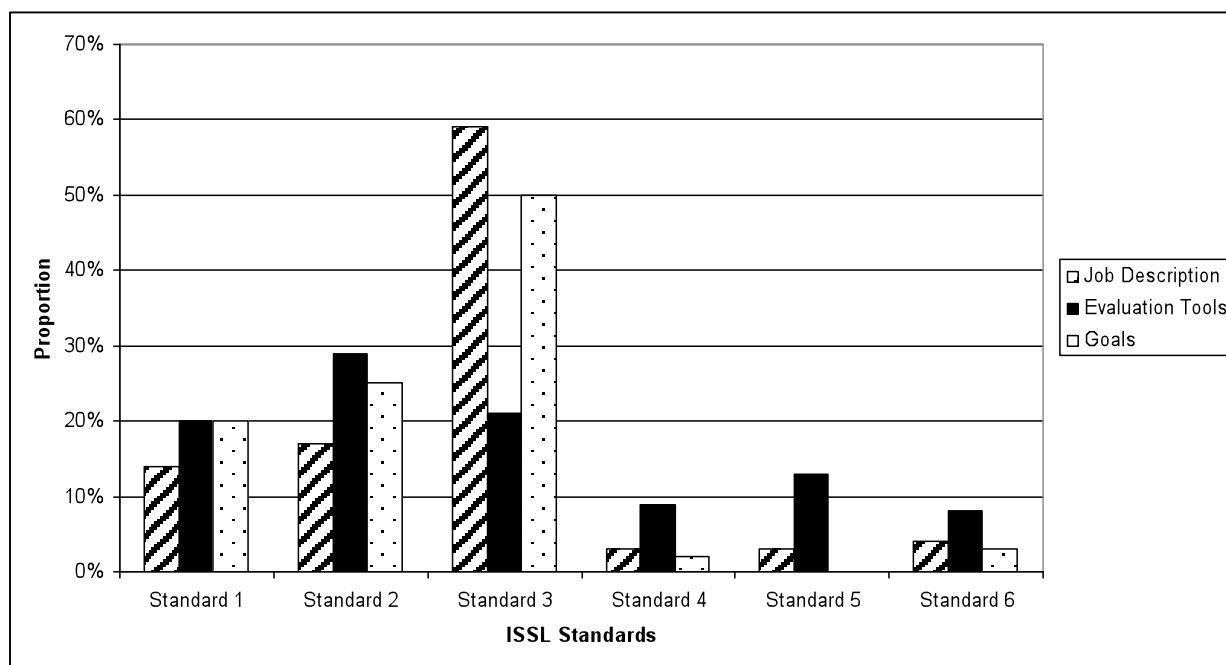


Figure 11. Comparison of the distribution of context units between sampling units.

Most notable was the difference between job descriptions (17%) and evaluation instruments (29%). There were nearly twice as many recording units in the evaluation instruments coded to Standard 2 of the ISSL than for the job descriptions.

In summary, the job descriptions analyzed contained 518 recording units to be coded to the six ISSL standards. The recording units within these samples coded to Standard 2 represented 17% of the 518 total units. In addition, the size of the district made little difference in the proportion of recording items coded to Standard 2. Districts in 3A had 16% of the items coded to Standard 2, and 4A districts had 17%.

The goals written by superintendents as part of their IAPDPs had 87 total recording units. Of those, 25% were coded to Standard 2 of the ISSL. The researcher then sorted the samples by

district size and found little difference in the proportion of goals coded to Standard 2 for the two district sizes used in this study.

The evaluation instruments analyzed in this study contained 582 recording units. Of those 582 recording units, 29% were coded to Standard 2 of the ISSL. The researcher found, upon further sorting, that 29% of evaluation instruments from 3A districts and 32% of the instruments from 4A districts aligned with criteria in Standard 2. There was little difference found between the two district sizes related to the proportion of recording items coded to Standard 2.

Finally, the researcher analyzed the congruence between job descriptions, evaluation instruments, and goals written by superintendents. The greatest difference was between the job descriptions (17%) and the evaluation instruments (29%). There were nearly twice as many recording units in the evaluation instruments coded to Standard 2 as there were in the job descriptions.

This chapter analyzed the criteria used to evaluate superintendents through the use of board-approved job descriptions, evaluation tools, and goals written by superintendents to improve their performance. The criteria were disaggregated to examine variances in the data based on school district enrollment size and within individual districts. Chapter 5 will provide a discussion of the results and present conclusions and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Problem

Superintendents can play a critical role in the success of a school district. As evidenced by Marzano and Waters (2009), certain actions and behaviors of central office administrators impact student learning. Superintendents should be expected to develop and possess the skill set necessary to effectively lead schools in the 21st century. The process of superintendent evaluation can be a driving force in holding superintendents accountable for this new type of leadership. DiPaola and Stronge (2003) espoused a need for school boards to craft policy, regulations, and procedures for a quality performance evaluation system for the superintendent. The use of an effective evaluation system should hold superintendents accountable for actions and behaviors associated with instructional leadership (Candoli, Cullen, & Stufflebeam, 1997).

This study was designed to examine the congruence among the evaluation instruments used to evaluate superintendents, the job descriptions of those superintendents, and their Individual Administrator Professional Development Plans (IAPDPs) with the identified standards and criteria of the Iowa Standards for School Leaders (ISSL) associated with instructional leadership.

Methodology

Content analysis methodology was used to analyze the written criteria in the evaluation instruments used to evaluate superintendents, the job descriptions of those superintendents, and the goals written by superintendents as part of their IAPDPs. Content analysis was chosen for this study because it is the research methodology best suited for the analysis of written forms of

communication (Borg & Gall, 1989; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Krippendorff, 2004).

Additionally, the methodology of this study was modeled after an earlier study completed by Fisher (1995), which investigated the congruence between the hiring criteria for superintendents in Iowa and the characteristics of transformational leadership.

The sample population used in this study included districts with the largest high school enrollments, identified by the Iowa High School Athletic Association (IHSAA) as members of Class 3A and Class 4A for football during the 2009–2010 school year. Eighty-six districts were eligible for this study based on the sample population used to conduct the research. Of the 20 districts invited to participate, 18 (90%) submitted the requested documents, including the evaluation instruments used in their last evaluations, their current job descriptions, and individual professional goals that they had written for the 2010–2011 school year.

The 52 documents submitted constituted sampling units. Each sampling unit was divided into recording units, which consisted of phrases that expressed ideas associated with actions or behaviors associated with the job of a superintendent. The 52 sampling units yielded 1187 recording units, which were then coded into one of six context units. For this study, each of the standards in the ISSL constituted a context unit.

After the recording units were coded into context units, analyses were conducted to examine the distribution of the context units by job description, evaluation instrument, and goals. In addition, the context units were examined by school size to determine if any differences existed between school size subgroups.

Findings

A majority of the districts (72%) had job descriptions that contained at least one criterion that reflected Standard 2 instructional leadership actions and behaviors. However, of the 518

recording units, only 17% were coded as Standard 2. Additionally, most of the districts (68%) had goals that contained at least one criterion reflecting Standard 2 instructional leadership actions and behaviors. The data analysis revealed that of the 87 recording units for superintendent goals, only 25% were coded as Standard 2. Last, a majority of the districts (68%) had evaluation tools that contained at least one criterion reflecting Standard 2 instructional leadership actions and behaviors. Of the 582 recording units derived from the evaluation instruments, 29% were coded as Standard 2. Nine (50%) of the districts reported using the SAI model evaluation instrument as part of their superintendent evaluation process, so there was a 1:1 correspondence between those instruments and the standards and criteria of the ISSL. The evaluation instruments were sorted to see if there was any variance between the SAI model instrument and those developed by districts.

Conclusions

1. The job descriptions used by subject school districts generally are not congruent with the criteria associated with instructional leadership.

Of the 518 recording units created from the job descriptions, only 17% were coded to Standard 2 of the ISSL. Most of the recording units (69%) were coded to Standard 3 and represented criteria associated with the management of the school district.

2. The goals written by subject superintendents are not congruent with the criteria associated with instructional leadership.

Of the 87 recording units created from the goals contained in the IAPDPs of superintendents, only 25% were coded to Standard 2 of the ISSL. The majority of the goals (50%) were focused on criteria related to the management of the district.

3. School districts have implemented the use of the ISSL as part of the evaluation process.

Of the 18 evaluation instruments submitted, 15 (83%) had implemented the use of the ISSL as part of the evaluation procedures. The remaining three (17%) were feedback related to the goals written by the superintendent.

4. The evaluation instruments had the same proportion of Standard 2 criteria as do the ISSL standards.

Of the 582 recording units created from the evaluation instruments, 175 (29%) were coded to Standard 2 of the ISSL. Of the 35 evaluation criteria in the ISSL, 11 (31%) were associated with Standard 2.

5. The size of the school district made little difference in the congruence of job descriptions, evaluation instruments, and IAPDP goals with the criteria associated with instructional leadership.

In the evaluation instruments from Class 3A schools, 29% of the recording items were coded to Standard 2, as compared to 32% in Class 4A schools. In the job description recording units, 16% were aligned with Standard 2 for Class 3A, and 17% for Class 4A. Finally, 27% of the goals written by superintendents in Class 3A were coded to Standard 2, as compared to 24% of the Class 4A goals congruent with Standard 2 of the ISSL.

6. There was little congruence among the job descriptions, evaluation instruments, and IAPDP goals written by superintendents.

In comparing the job descriptions and the evaluation instruments, there were nearly twice as many criteria in the evaluation instruments (29%) as in the job descriptions (17%) related to Standard 2 of the ISSL.

Discussion

School districts around the country have continued to hear the sharp cry for educational reform. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 brought higher expectations and greater accountability for schools across the country. In response, districts are challenged to take a critical look to find areas of leverage to improve their organizations. One area of leverage is the superintendent's role in boosting student achievement within the district. The work of Marzano and Waters (2009) revealed that superintendents really do matter when it comes to improving student achievement and that certain actions and behaviors from the chief administrator can impact the overall success of the organization. This finding is supported by the Iowa Association of School Boards in their work on *The Lighthouse Inquiry* (2001) as well. Superintendents in high-performing school districts act differently than superintendents in lower-performing ones. Boards of education should expect greater accountability for these actions and behaviors from their superintendents (DiPaola & Stronge, 2003). Superintendents can and should be held accountable for exhibiting these high-yielding behaviors through the use of comprehensive and thoughtful evaluation systems (DiPaola, 2007; DiPaola & Stronge, 2003; Iowa Association of School Boards, 2001; Kowalski, 2006; Marzano & Waters, 2009).

Some researchers would suggest the evaluation system is flawed. Dillon and Hollowell (as cited in Candoli, Cullen & Stufflebeam, 1997) found the lack of skills necessary to conduct an effective evaluation as a major weakness of the evaluation system. Myers' (1993) study identified the need for training for evaluators as a priority for both superintendents and school board presidents. Likewise, Hoyle, Bjork, Collier, and Glass (2005) identified a lack of training for board members as a barrier to conducting worthwhile evaluations that served the needs of everyone involved. Unfortunately, when board members are not properly trained to conduct

effective evaluations, which are judgment-based by nature, personal agendas can creep into the process (Robinson & Bickers, 1990). Hoyle and Skrla (1999) cited instances in which superintendents received high marks during their formal evaluation and were later fired for circumstances not addressed in the evaluation process. A credible feedback loop is necessary to allow board members to communicate with the superintendent regarding his or her strengths, weaknesses, and performance (McGrath, 2007). In Glass's (2007) study of the superintendency, 69.6% of the 147 subjects who felt that they were evaluated unfairly believed it to be because the board had used criteria that were not agreed upon by the board and superintendent. In Robinson and Bickers's (1990) study, they found that fewer than 10% of surveyed superintendents had had conversations about evaluation criteria prior to the evaluation. There needs to be a strong feedback loop between the superintendent and the board so that both parties understand clearly the expectations of the evaluation system (DiPaola & Stronge, 2003; Kowalski, 2006). Superintendents could benefit from feedback related to progress on their goals as well as toward criteria in their evaluation (Glass & Franceschini, 2007; Sackos, 2009).

The data analysis in this study revealed that 37% of the subject superintendents' goals were submitted without indicators of progress. The researcher wonders if the use of progress checkpoints would allow the superintendent and the board to recognize progress made toward the written goals. Glass and Franceschini (2007) espoused the use of a formative approach to assessing goals, including a mid-year assessment to monitor superintendents' progress on their goals. Unfortunately, studies indicate (Glass, 2007; Kowalski, McCord, Petersen, Young, & Ellerson, 2011; Sackos, 2009) that evaluation is a single event rather than an ongoing process. Progress indicators would clearly outline and monitor the efforts of the superintendent related to the work aligned to these goals. Goals written by the superintendent should be measurable and

evaluated along the way so that there are no surprises at the end if goals are not met (Calzi, 1989; O'Neill & Conzemius, 2006). As superintendents strive to accomplish goals, it is critical to assess their progress in order to make necessary adjustments. The data analysis also showed that 28% of the evaluation instruments did not have a section in which board members could make comments or provide feedback beyond a rating of the superintendent's progress on criteria. It seems to the researcher that the use of a rating scale such as 1–5 without any explanation of the score offers little, if any, value to the person being evaluated. If all parties believe that the evaluation process is implemented in order to assess the performance of the superintendent and to offer evidence and support for continued improvement and growth, then it is necessary to provide constructive, objective feedback to the person being evaluated. This would make the process more meaningful and the evaluation more useful for all involved (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1988). The researcher wonders if ongoing communication and feedback between the board and the superintendent would help clarify expectations in the process and contribute to better relationships between the superintendent and board.

DiPaola and Stronge (2003) believed that the evaluation process begins even before a superintendent is hired. The development and implementation of a job description that reflects the board's expectations regarding the work of the superintendent is critical. The job description can serve as explicit communication to the superintendent and overtly describe the roles, duties and responsibilities that the board expects. Many researchers (DiPaola, 2007; DiPaola & Stronge, 2003; Kowalski, 2006; Redfern, 1980) believed that the superintendent should clearly understand the responsibilities that the board relies on him or her to fulfill. The absence of clearly defined job expectations often plague superintendent evaluations (DiPaola & Stronge, 2003). The job description can and should serve as the basis for the superintendent's evaluation

(Lueders, 1987). “Job descriptions are necessary for showing job-relatedness of all performance appraisal methods and are the basis for the performance measures fed back to the superintendent” (Hoyle, Bjork, Collier, & Glass, 2005, p. 208).

The results of this study revealed that only 17% of the recording units related to the criteria in the job descriptions focused on the work around instructional leadership set out in Standard 2. In contrast, 59% of the criteria were centered on the management aspect of the position set out in Standard 3. This research confirms that boards in this sample may believe that the priority of the superintendent is to provide leadership in management rather than in instruction. An extreme example would be the job description of one of the respondents that contained 70 recording units, of which 80% were aligned with Standard 3, or management. This would suggest to superintendents that actions associated with the management of that district are valued, and that the superintendent’s time, resources, and energies should be concentrated in those behaviors. Unfortunately, Standard 3 behaviors in and of themselves are not what move districts forward. Superintendents could get bogged down in actions that are not associated with school renewal (Iowa Association of School Boards, 2001). The analysis of data revealed little congruence between job descriptions and evaluation instruments.

Locke and Latham (1990) believed that specific and difficult goals produce higher levels of performance than vague, nonquantitative goals; that difficult goals result in higher levels of performance; and that goals are strong motivators regardless of whether they are self-selected, jointly chosen, or assigned by others. Marzano and Waters (2009) found that effective superintendents focus their efforts on creating goal-oriented districts. In addition, Marzano and Waters (2009) found that districts with high levels of student achievement had boards of

education aligned with and supportive of non-negotiable instructional leadership goals. They ensured that these goals remained the district's primary focus.

The analysis of data found that only 25% of goals written by superintendents reflected work associated with instructional leadership. By comparison, twice as many (50%) of the goals submitted for the study were oriented toward management tasks related to Standard 3 of the ISSL. The development of goals associated with the management and operations of the school could reflect the emphasis placed on management responsibilities, duties, and roles outlined in the job description, as discussed in Chapter 4. The goals developed by the superintendent should reflect the board's priorities and align with the district's goals as outlined in the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP). The findings suggest that some of the board priorities may be more closely aligned to the day-to-day management of the district than to the teaching and learning mission. In addition, only 38% of the goals submitted by the respondents contained action steps. The researcher is concerned that it would be difficult to achieve goals without specific action plans to help the superintendent map out a path to achieve the goals.

The organizational structures of school districts can vary greatly. In smaller districts, school personnel may play a variety of roles in the organization, while in larger districts the role of each individual may become narrowly specialized. The researcher wonders if the immediate needs of the districts play a critical role in the way boards prioritize their work. For instance, in many districts, boards of education are responding to shrinking budgets and declining enrollments. These issues cannot be ignored. Unfortunately, some of their other work takes a back seat to the crisis issues that accompany shrinking revenues and increased operating costs. The need to close buildings and cut programs can quickly overshadow other priorities, including the teaching and learning mission. In contrast, some districts are seeing an increase in student

enrollment and must respond to challenges associated with growth. In these instances, the work of the board and superintendent can be dominated by building projects, space issues, and the hiring of personnel to respond to the increase in student enrollment. It would be reasonable to expect the evaluation of the superintendent to reflect the work related to these front burner issues when a great deal of time is spent on those issues. Unfortunately, these crisis issues can prevent superintendents from engaging in the system as instructional leaders.

The analysis conducted in this study showed little difference between the two school size subgroups. The subgroups represented Iowa school districts with K–12 enrollments of approximately 1000–9000 students. The choice of sample population for this study was an attempt to isolate the independent variables associated with multiple high school districts and districts with fewer than 1000 students.

In high-achieving districts, the board-superintendent team consistently expressed an “elevating” view of students (Iowa Association of School Boards, 2001). If buildings within the district have diverse needs, then the response of leadership teams to those needs will vary. This “elevated” view of all students may require the superintendent to concentrate more resources in a building with a higher poverty rate (or lower socio-economic status [SES]) or English Language Learner (ELL) population than he or she would devote to buildings that do not face the challenges associated with working with those populations (Odden & Archibald, 2001). The difference in buildings’ requirements suggests a need to allow site-based management by the principals. Glass (2000) found that 75% of boards of education surveyed support site-based management. Marzano and Waters (2009) recognized this as “defined autonomy.” They believed that effective superintendents created non-negotiable goals, yet allowed the principals and teachers to conduct the work that they believed to be necessary in their buildings to achieve

these goals. Providing autonomy and allowing people to do purposeful work is a strong motivator (Pink, 2009). The ability to understand the context of the district and the needs from one building to the next is critical in the superintendent's work, and the goals developed and evaluation process should reflect this work.

The superintendent should have a strong moral compass and model actions and behaviors that are both ethical and professional. Worner (2010) found that honesty and integrity are listed in every profile of desired qualifications when it comes to hiring superintendents. This means that leaders must do the right things for the right reasons, regardless of external pressures. Leading with integrity builds trust among all stakeholders. Trust is a critical component of any organizational structure (Hoyle, English, & Steffy, 1998; Stilwell, 2003). Trust also is necessary to foster solid relationships between the board and superintendent in order to carry out the difficult work associated with school renewal (Iowa Association of School Boards, 2001). The evaluation process should hold the superintendent accountable for exhibiting high moral character and strong ethics.

Data revealed that only 3% of the recording units in the job descriptions reflected the criteria associated with professional and ethical conduct of the superintendent in Standard 5. Additionally, of the 87 recording units for goals submitted, there was not one goal that addressed Standard 5 ethics. The researcher wonders if school boards believe that the hiring process takes care of this issue: board presidents may believe that background checks and interview processes will catch problems associated with poor character in their hires. Unfortunately, it is in the midst of trials and tribulations that true character may reveal itself. Political and other external pressures may tempt a superintendent to make questionable compromises. The evaluation process and goal setting should be instruments for holding these leaders accountable for their

actions and behaviors. The results of this study suggest that the issue of ethics does not receive enough attention in defining the role of the superintendent or in the goals that they set for themselves. It appears that ethical conduct may be assumed as a “given” once the hire is made.

The superintendent’s role is shifting because superintendents must behave and act in ways that increase student achievement (Iowa Association of School Boards, 2001; Marzano & Waters, 2009). This shift creates a dichotomy between the superintendent’s roles of management leader and educational leader. The work of all constituents, including the district’s chief administrator, should contribute to efforts to increase student achievement. Tasks associated with the management and operation of the district can contribute to these efforts if the purpose for the work is grounded in efforts to boost student performance. Bjork (1993) recognized that superintendents’ actions and behaviors are a result of where they place priorities in their work. The use of routine management tasks can boost student achievement. For instance, in this study, several job descriptions had a recording unit referencing the expectation for the superintendent to attend all board meetings. Most of the recording units set the expectation of attendance only, while a few of the criteria addressed the purpose behind the attendance, such as advising the board, communicating progress toward goals, and sharing current trends in education. This is an example of taking a routine management expectation such as meeting attendance and elevating the task to contribute to organizational improvement.

The analysis of data revealed several criteria within the job descriptions, goals, and evaluation instruments that aligned with the management of the fiscal and physical resources of the district. Marzano and Waters (2009) found that effective superintendents ensure that all necessary resources, including time, money, personnel, and materials, are allocated to accomplish the district’s goals. In order for routine management tasks to be elevated to actions

associated with improved student achievement, the decisions within these actions should be purposeful and aligned to the efforts to create an effective organization. Odden and Archibald (2001) believed that boards and superintendents must conduct resource reallocation processes within districts to better align resources with districts' goals and priorities. These researchers identified poor services to special needs populations, including SES and ELL students; the overall low performance of districts across the country; and the need to align resources and materials to state standards as the driving force for this reallocation process. The recording units in the job descriptions fell short of explaining how the management tasks were connected to efforts to boost student achievement, and thus many recording units were more congruent with Standard 3, as presented in Chapter 4.

Superintendent training programs must prepare candidates and help aspiring superintendents to develop the skills necessary to serve as instructional leaders (Murphy, Hawley, & Young, 2005). If superintendents are to be held accountable and evaluated against criteria associated with instructional leadership, the researcher wonders how many graduate programs offering superintendent endorsements structure their programs to align coursework with this shift in leading school districts. In this time of higher expectations and greater accountability, superintendent preparation programs play a critical role in preparing superintendents for the type of work necessary to improve student performance. Hoyle, Bjork, Collier, and Glass (2005, p. 220) believed that "the call for more outcome measures is directing scholars in educational administration to find stronger relationships between what is learned in graduate programs and how learning can be transferred to actual job performance."

A shift in hiring practices must occur to ensure that school leaders have the skill set necessary to lead districts during this time of heightened accountability and expectations. Fisher

(1995) found that hiring criteria for superintendents were not congruent with behaviors associated with transformational leadership. In support of this finding, Schlueter's (2007) study determined that hiring criteria for school leaders were not congruent with behaviors and actions associated with second-order change as defined by Heifetz (1994). This is the kind of deep change necessary to enact sustainable reform. The Iowa Association of School Boards (2001) identified seven conditions needed for productive change. The researcher is curious whether boards of education are able to find superintendent candidates who can create structures and processes within the organization to promote these conditions. The evaluation process can be used to hold superintendents accountable for creating and sustaining a district culture that acknowledges and supports the conditions necessary for educational renewal (Iowa Association of School Boards, 2001).

The evaluation of the superintendent should not be an isolated event, but rather an ongoing process of improvement for the superintendent as well as for the entire organization (DiPaola & Stronge, 2003; Sackos, 2009). "The purpose of evaluating performance 'is not to prove but to improve' the superintendent's executive skills in leading a school district to greater effectiveness" (Hoyle, Bjork, Collier, & Glass, 2005, p. 210). In a time of higher stakes and greater accountability, more and more is being learned about what effective superintendents and high-performing school districts do differently (Iowa Association of School Boards, 2001; Marzano & Waters, 2009) from their underperforming counterparts. Boards of education can use comprehensive job descriptions and well-developed evaluation instruments to implement goals aligned to instructional leadership and hold superintendents accountable for focusing their work on actions that directly contribute to increased student learning (DiPaola, 2007; DiPaola & Stronge, 2003, Kowalski, 2007).

The ISSL standards serve as the measuring stick against which superintendents are evaluated in the state of Iowa. These standards should be reflected in the evaluation criteria contained in the job descriptions for superintendents, the evaluation instruments through which they are evaluated, and the goals that superintendents write as part of their professional development plans. A growing body of evidence (Iowa Association of School Boards, 2001; Marzano & Waters, 2009) suggests that superintendents should function as the instructional leaders of the districts in which they serve. Therefore, it would be necessary to ensure that all components of superintendent evaluation measure the superintendent's ability to serve as an instructional leader. The researcher wonders, however, whether boards of education understand the ISSL standards and their criteria and are able to recognize evidence that shows proficiency in the standards. Likewise, the researcher is curious whether superintendents are prepared to actively serve in this newly defined role. It will be important for both parties to continue to expand their competencies in the use of the standards to drive the important work accomplished by school leaders. One thing is clear: superintendents have a tremendous opportunity to lead school districts during a time of great challenge and change.

Recommendations for Further Research

The following recommendations for future research are offered to address the limitations of this study and to further the body of knowledge concerning the performance evaluation for school district superintendents. The researcher suggests:

1. a study that seeks to determine the boards of education's knowledge and understanding of the ISSL as well as their priorities within these standards related to the work of the superintendent;
2. a replication of this study with all superintendents in the state of Iowa that seeks a comprehensive view of the congruence between evaluation criteria and instructional leadership;
3. a study that seeks to determine the value placed on the ISSL by superintendents across Iowa and the impact on the work they do;
4. a study that seeks to determine how well graduate programs are preparing superintendents to focus their work in relation to the ISSL, particularly Standard 2;
5. a study that seeks to determine how boards of education plan for the evaluation of the superintendent; and
6. a longitudinal study that seeks to determine trends in the use of the ISSL with superintendent evaluation.

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Appendix A: Personnel Evaluation Standards' Applicability to Personnel Actions

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Appendix B
Summary Descriptions of Evaluation Models (reproduced from Candoli, Cullen, & Stufflebeam, 1997, p. 114–115)

ORIENTATION	Global Judgment				Judgment Driven by Specified Criteria					Judgment Driven by Data		
Model	Board Judgment	Descriptive Narrative Reports	Formative Exchanges about Performance	Stakeholder Evaluation	Printed Rating Forms	Report Cards	Management by Objective	Performance Contracts	Duties-based Evaluation	Superintendent Portfolio	Student Outcome Measures	School and District Accreditation
DISTINCTIVE FEATURES	Individual and collective board judgment	Board's end-of-year written report	Regular exchanges between board and superintendent	Assessment based on systematic querying of stakeholders	Assessments are gathered with a printed form	Board grades the superintendent's performance	Assessment against pre-specified objectives	Contract specifying expected outcomes and consequences of success or failure	Comprehensive assessment against defined duties	Demonstration of performance using accountability records	Judgment of superintendent performance against student achievement	Judgment of superintendent performance based on district accreditation results
VARIATIONS	Verbal or written judgments	Structured or open-ended report; superintendent may also write a report	In scheduling of evaluation exchanges	Criteria may or may not be specified; methods of data collection and sampling may vary	In types of form, e.g., rating scale, checklist, or questionnaire. In groups completing the form	Other groups, e.g., media, assign grades	Objectives may be specific or broad	Sometimes includes a financial incentive	May use specific administrator duties or broader job responsibilities	Board may collect some of the data; may include aggregation guidelines	Tests vary; they may be state mandated, norm-referenced, or criterion-referenced	In evidence considered and how it is collected; accrediting body may be a regional or state organization
PURPOSES	Formative and summative	Formative and summative	Mainly formative	Mainly summative	Formative and summative	Summative	Formative and summative	Mainly summative	Formative and summative	Formative and summative	Summative	Summative
CUT SCORES/ STANDARDS	Unspecified	Unspecified	Unspecified	May be specified	Descriptive or numerical ratings	Unspecified	May be specified	Specified in the contract	May be specified	Usually unspecified	Norms may be used	Externally defined

Orientation	Global Judgment				Judgment Driven by Specified Criteria					Judgment Driven by Data		
Model	Board Judgment	Descriptive Narrative Reports	Formative Exchanges about Performance	Stakeholder Evaluation	Printed Rating Forms	Report Cards	Management by Objective	Performance Contracts	Duties-based Evaluation	Superintendent Portfolio	Student Outcome Measures	School and District Accreditation
DATA COLLECTION	Board members as participant observers	Board members as participant observers	Board members as participant observers	Varied, may include letters, questionnaires, rating forms, focus groups	Completion of the form by participant observers	Not always focused Observation/review of records and test scores	Board members as interviewers and observers	Observations/review of records and test scores	Observation, accountability reports, or data review	Portfolio compiled by superintendent and possibly board	Student tests and other outcome information	Self-study and site visits
REPORTING	Executive session; oral and written	Written report in executive session	Periodic discussion, usually in executive session	Oral or written, first in executive session, followed by public report	Written report; public or private	May be in executive session or given to the media	Oral and/or written; usually in executive session	Oral and/or written; usually in executive session	Oral and/or written; often in executive order	Discussion in executive session	Interpretation of test scores; usually in executive session	Executive discussion of a public report
GENERAL TIMELINE	Usually once a year; may be more often	Usually once a year	Periodic or as needs arise	Not more than once a year	Usually once a year	Usually once a year	Quarterly	Usually once a year	Usually once a year; can be more often	Usually mid-year and end of year	Usually once a year	Whenever accreditation report is due, e.g., every 5 years
EVALUATION/PARTICIPATION	Board members	Board members and superintendent	Board members and superintendent	Board members and stakeholders, sometimes external evaluators	Board members and possibly other stakeholders	Board members; sometimes media or others	Board members and sometimes an outside evaluator	Board members and possibly other stakeholders	Board members and possibly other stakeholders	Board members and superintendent with input from other stakeholders	Board members	District accrediting personnel

Appendix C

Main Strengths of Alternative Evaluation Models (reproduced from Candoli, Cullen, & Stufflebeam, 1997, p. 116)

Orientation		Global Judgment		Judgment Driven by Specified Criteria						Judgment Driven by Data		
Model	Board Judgment	Descriptive Narrative Reports	Formative Exchanges about Performance	Stakeholder Evaluation	Printed Rating Forms	Report Cards	Management by Objective	Performance Contracts	Duties-based Evaluation	Superintendent Portfolio	Student Outcome Measures	School and District Accreditation
MAIN STRENGTHS	Easy and inexpensive to use	Inexpensive and easy to implement	Easy and inexpensive to implement	Regular evaluation using board-approved procedures	Ensures regular evaluations by the district's top policy body	Provides a familiar format for communicating evaluation results to the community	Ensures regular evaluation using board-approved procedures	Ensures regular evaluation using board- and superintendent-approved procedures	Ensures regular evaluation using board-approved criteria	Assures regular evaluation using board- and superintendent-approved procedures	Assures regular evaluation using board-approved methods	Regular evaluation by an external organization, which may lend credibility
	Ensures regular evaluation using board-approved procedures	Ensures regular evaluation using board-approved procedures	Ensures frequent evaluation using board-approved procedures	Involvement of stakeholders in the evaluation process	Easy and inexpensive to implement	Permits great flexibility in determining the criteria to be used	Performance criteria/objectives are specified and periodically reviewed	Is cost effective and flexible enough to meet local conditions	Easy and not too costly to implement	Helps delineate board/superintendent roles	Use of learning measures reduces risk of bias and conflict of interest	Ensures that students receive a minimally acceptable level of education
	Grounded in direct board/superintendent exchange	Encourages board reflection and a carefully considered evaluation	Much scope to consider a range of locally relevant criteria and to respond to changing district circumstances	Provisions for collecting data from a variety of sources	Provides for cross-checks of rating and addressing conflicts of interest	Easy and inexpensive to implement	Recognition of and planning for current district priorities	Criteria are specified, and there is scope to incorporate district priorities	A well-defined duties list will ensure a comprehensive evaluation	Data sources are clear, multiple, and auditable	Reasonably inexpensive to implement	Requires minimal staff, superintendent, and board time
	Provides scope to consider a wide range of criteria tied to district priorities	Provides scope to consider wide-ranging criteria tied to district priorities	Provides continuous formative feedback	Encourages participation of the broader community in evaluation of the superintendent	Criteria are specified and applied consistently by all evaluators	Involvement of others may ensure fair treatment of the superintendent	A more objective approach	There is a legal avenue for appeal	Criteria for the evaluation are specified based on agreed-upon duties	Use of data reduces bias and conflicts of interest	Focuses the work of the superintendent on student achievement	May yield other information that is important to the district
	Involves multiple judgments as a basis for making summative evaluation	Board and superintendent interact formally at least annually and directly	Board and superintendent interact formally and directly about adequacy of the superintendent's performance		Well-developed forms ensure a comprehensive evaluation	Provisions for the superintendent and board to agree on criteria before the evaluation	Easy to implement		Facilitates clarification of superintendent and board roles	Flexibility to include (and review regularly) wide-ranging criteria tied to district needs		Data sources are clear
		Evaluation is flexible and responsive to district priorities and needs							Provisions for collecting data from a variety of sources	Includes provisions for stakeholder input		May help district to set goals and priorities
									Includes ethical considerations			

Appendix D

Main Weaknesses of Alternative Evaluation Models (reproduced from Candoli, Cullen, & Stufflebeam, 1997, p. 117)

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Appendix E
Areas of Focus for ISSL Standards (reproduced from Hessel & Holloway, 2002)

Standard 1: THE VISION OF LEARNING	
Areas of Focus	Knowledge and Skills
Facilitation Skills	Fosters the development of a vision for learning and the components of this vision to promote the success of all students
	Articulates the vision for all stakeholders through a variety of communication models
	Articulates the processes necessary to achieve the vision
	Communicates effectively with all stakeholders on the implementation of the vision
Challenging Standards	Builds a shared commitment to high standards of learning and achievement for all students
Strategic Planning Process	Facilitates development of objectives and strategies in the implementation plan and process to implement the vision effectively
	Demonstrates how strategic planning processes focus on student learning, inform vision, and draw on relevant sources of student achievement data and demographic data pertaining to students and their families
	Monitors, evaluates and revises the plan
Building Leadership Capacity	Facilitates collegiality and teamwork
	Delegates responsibility and develops leadership in others
	Structures significant work
Community Involvement	Involves school community members in realization of the vision and in related school improvement efforts

Standard 2: THE CULTURE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING	
Areas of Focus	Knowledge and Skills
Culture	Uses multiple methods to assess and create a school or district culture that recognizes diversity (e.g., language, disability, gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status)
	Uses content-appropriate strategies for creating a positive school or district culture
Instructional Program	Uses principles of effective instruction, research methods, and other resources
	Makes use of and promotes technology and information systems to enrich curriculum and instruction
	Develops a school profile using qualitative and quantitative data to make recommendations regarding the design, implementation, and evaluation of curriculum that fully accommodate the diverse needs of individual teachers
Student Learning	Applies human development theories, learning and motivational theories, and concern for diversity to the learning process
	Profiles student performance; analyzes possible differences among subgroups of students along relevant characteristics such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender
	Promotes an environment for increased student learning and achievement and promotes increased professional competence of staff and self
Professional Growth	Designs well-planned and context-appropriate professional development that focuses on student learning, consistent with the school's vision and goals
	Develops and implements personal professional growth plans that reflect a commitment to lifelong learning

Standard 3: THE MANAGEMENT OF LEARNING	
Areas of Focus	Knowledge and Skills
Organization	Uses knowledge of learning, teaching, student development, and organizational development to optimize learning for all students
	Applies appropriate models and principles of organizational development and management, including data-based decision-making with indicators of equity, effectiveness, and efficiency to optimize learning for all students
Operations	Involves stakeholders in operations and setting priorities
	Uses appropriate and effective communication and group processing skills to build consensus and resolve conflict in order to link resources to the instructional vision Models community collaboration for staff and offers opportunities for staff to develop family and community collaboration skills
Resources	Uses problem-solving skills and knowledge of strategic, long-range operational planning for effective, efficient, and equitable resource allocation and alignment
	Seeks new resources to facilitate learning Applies and assesses current technologies for school management, business procedures, and scheduling
Safe Schools	Assures safe, effective, and efficient facilities planning and use

Standard 4: RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE BROADER COMMUNITY TO FOSTER LEARNING	
Areas of Focus	Knowledge and Skills
Collaboration	Applies comprehensive community relations models
	Uses effective marketing strategies and processes
	Develops outreach programs with different religious, business, political, and service groups
	Establishes partnerships with business, community, government, and higher education groups
	Involves stakeholders in the decision-making process
	Supports the belief that families have the best interest of their children in mind and involves families to impact student learning positively
Community Interests and Needs	Collaborates with community agencies to integrate health, social, and other services
	Maintains high visibility and active involvement with the community
Community Resources	Acknowledges individuals and groups and can analyze their perspectives
	Appropriately utilizes community resources, including youth services, to support student achievement, solve school problems, and achieve school goals
	Looks for opportunities to offer school resources to serve the community and social service agencies
Diversity	Use public resources and funds appropriately and effectively
	Capitalizes on the diversity of the school community to improve school programs and meet diverse needs of all students
	Serves as an advocate for students with special and exceptional needs

Standard 5: INTEGRITY, FAIRNESS, AND ETHICS IN LEARNING	
Areas of Focus	Knowledge and Skills
Integrity	Understands how one's office can be used in the service of all students and families to create a caring school community
	Demonstrates honesty in all professional and personal endeavors and expects honesty in others
Fairness	Demonstrates impartiality when dealing with members of diverse groups
	Exhibits sensitivity to the diversity within the school community
Ethics	Possesses a core set of values and beliefs that underlies the decision-making process that contributes to the common good

Standard 6: THE POLITICAL, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, LEGAL, AND CULTURAL CONTEXT OF LEARNING	
Areas of Focus	Knowledge and Skills
Political	Knows the impact that political and policy-making decisions have on teaching and learning
Social	Knows how the social fabric of the larger community influences the educational enterprise
Economic	Understands the impact of economic conditions on the availability of resources and on teaching and learning
Legal	Understands the importance of operating the school within the law and how the law can be used to promote the success of all students
Cultural	Knows and understands the cultural context of the larger community and is able to use this knowledge to develop activities and policies that benefit students and their families

Appendix F
Letter to Participants

Matthew J. Adams
112 NW Driftwood Ct.
Ankeny, Iowa 50023
515.783.4833
matt.adams@ankenyschools.org

Informed Consent Form— Request for Documents for Analysis (Drake University)

December 14, 2010

Dear Participant,

I am a doctoral candidate at Drake University and am conducting a research study about the evaluation process of superintendents in Iowa. A growing body of evidence indicates the superintendent of schools plays a critical role in the work to improve student achievement. I want to examine the various components used to conduct performance appraisals and determine the congruence of those documents to the ISSL Standards and their criteria associated with instructional leadership.

The sample population for this study includes Iowa districts classified as 3A or 4A in football for the 2010–2011 school year by the Iowa High School Athletic Association. Districts in the Urban 8 have been excluded from this study because the complexity of multiple high schools does not make them representative of most districts across the state of Iowa. Using a random number table, your district has been randomly chosen to participate in this study. Although there is no direct benefit to you for participating in this study, your data will help contribute to our understanding of superintendent evaluation practices in the state of Iowa. Unfortunately, you will not be compensated for your time.

Participation in this study poses no risks beyond those risks experienced in everyday life. I expect that participating in this research project will take approximately 30 minutes. Please respond to this letter by electronically sending your current job description, Individual Professional Development Plan, and the evaluation tool used in your most recent evaluation. I am not interested in the content or results of your last evaluation, but rather a copy of the instrument used in the evaluation. After I receive your information, I will identify all the context units within these documents and code them to the Iowa Standards for School Leaders. Submission of these documents indicates your informed consent to participate in this study.

The following are the terms of participating in this study:

- The information obtained during this project will be used in the preparation of my dissertation, which will be published. Additionally, an oral summary of the research will be presented as part of my defense.

- Your identity and school district will be kept confidential and I will use a numbering system when referring to you during data collection and in the written analysis. Your name and other facts that might point to you will not appear when I present this study.
- All digital documents will be identified by a numbering system and will be stored in a password-protected folder on my home computer. All hard copies of data will be secured in a locked safe in my home. Aside from the coders and me, the researcher, no other person will have access to the raw data.
- All digital data will be destroyed via a digital shredding program five years following publication of my dissertation. All hard copies of data will be shredded five years following publication of my dissertation.
- You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Your participation is completely voluntary. Withdrawing from the project will not result in any negative consequences for you.
- You will receive a copy of the analysis, if requested, before the final draft is submitted and can negotiate changes with me, the researcher. If you do not request a copy of the analysis, I may ask you to participate in a member check of the analysis. Participation in a member check would take approximately 30 minutes.
- Upon request, you will receive a copy of the final analysis soon after completion.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this project, please feel free to contact me at any time. If you would like to talk to someone other than me, please feel free to contact my advisor, Dr. David Darnell, at Drake University, School of Education: telephone, 515-271-2082; e-mail, david.darnell@drake.edu. In addition, you may contact Drake's IRB at 515-271-3472 or irb@drake.edu.

Respectfully,

Matthew J. Adams
David F. Darnell, PhD., Faculty Advisor

The Drake University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has approved this study from 12/14/2010 to 12/14/2011.

Appendix G
Letter of Support from School Administrators of Iowa

**School
Administrators
of Iowa**

12199 Stratford Drive, Clive, Iowa 50325 | phone 515.267.1115 | fax 515.267.1066 | www.sai-iowa.org

November 17, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

The School Administrators of Iowa, the professional association comprised of over 1800 of Iowa's school leaders, is in full support of Matt Adams' dissertation study, "A Content Analysis of the Congruence Between the Evaluation Criteria of Superintendents and the Iowa Standards for School Leaders." The Iowa Standards for School Leaders have been in existence for over eight years, and officially adopted by the State Board of Education in 2007. A joint task force comprised of superintendents and school board members developed a model superintendent evaluation resource guide in 2004 to help school boards know best practices in evaluating the superintendent. Mr. Adams' study will answer a crucial question regarding whether the existence of those standards (and perhaps even the model evaluation resource guide) has impacted superintendent evaluation processes.

One of our staff members, Dr. Troyce Fisher, serves on Matt's committee and has been fully apprised of the scope and methodology of his study. We were also pleased that Matt's study has received the endorsement of the American Association of School Administrators (ASSA). The findings of his research will inform our association's work as we attempt to take to scale best practices in accountability for student achievement.

It is our hope that you will cooperate with the requests for information Matt asks of you so the state can continue to provide both pressure and support as we build systems accountable for student learning.

Respectfully,
Dr. Dan Smith
Executive Director

Appendix H

Instructions for Creating Recording Units from Sampling Units

Read all the job descriptions, Individual Professional Development Plans, and evaluation instruments in your packet once to give you an idea of how they are worded.

Then, using a single district's job description, and using the different colored highlighters found in your packet, highlight the parts of the job description that represent a distinct criterion to you, using different colored highlighters for each separate idea.

Sometimes it will be obvious what one complete criterion is, e.g., "Provides leadership for major initiatives and change efforts." Sometimes one criterion contains a complex thought, e.g., "Provides leadership for major initiatives and change efforts by monitoring student achievement data to guide decisions." In that case, break down the complex thought into two distinct units, highlighting each of the recording units with a different colored highlighter. So, "Providing leadership for major initiatives" would be highlighted in one color and "monitoring student achievement data to guide decisions" would be highlighted in a different color. When in doubt, keep the big thoughts together and assume that the writers of the criteria lumped together ideas to suggest one complete thought in one sentence.

Sometimes districts use headings for groups of characteristics or descriptors of what a criterion means. Highlight each big idea, without duplicating. For instance, if "attributes of an outstanding superintendent" is given as a heading, followed by "data-driven," "student focused," and "high expectations of principals," only the three descriptors would be highlighted because they describe what is meant by the heading. However, if the heading "sense of belonging for each student" is followed by "gave specific examples for what he/she does for individual students, classrooms and building-wide," only the heading would be highlighted because the descriptor explains how it will be judged. There may be criteria where both the heading and some descriptors are chosen if they describe separate ideas.

Repeat steps two and three for the remaining districts' job descriptions, IAPDPs, and evaluation instruments contained in your packet.

When you have completed the entire process of creating recording units from the district sampling units, seal the envelope and return it to the researcher.

Thank you for your cooperation in the conduct of this study.

(Directions minimally revised, Fisher, 1995, p. 163)

Appendix I

Instructions for Coding Recording Units Into Context Units

Read the “Superintendent Leadership Performance Review” guide, which is found in the packet.

Locate the list of criteria in the packet. Read through the list. For each of the recording units identified, record either a “1” for Standard 1 of the ISSL, a “2” for Standard 2, a “3” for Standard 3, and so on. One and only one code can be identified for each recording unit. In cases where there is more than one phrase in the recording unit, assume that the predominant theme is represented by the first idea presented in the recording unit.

If you are unsure of how to code a particular recording unit, write in your comments about your concerns on the space provided after the recording unit. If you do not believe the recording unit can accurately be placed in any of the six categories provided, do not code the recording unit at all. Note your reasons for not coding in the space provided after the recording unit.

When coding, use the “Superintendent Leadership Performance Review” guide but do not limit yourself to coding only the recording units if they are worded exactly as they appear on the guide itself. Use your best judgment regarding the appropriate category in which to code the recording unit, matching it to the general description provided in each category. Phrases do not have to exactly match, and in most cases will not exactly match, those that appear in either of the description guides.

When you are finished coding each recording unit according to the category it most clearly fits, return the packet to the researcher.

If you are unclear about any step in this process, please consult with the researcher for clarification before you begin your coding.

Thank you for your cooperation in the conduct of this study.

(Directions minimally revised, Fisher, 1995, p. 165)